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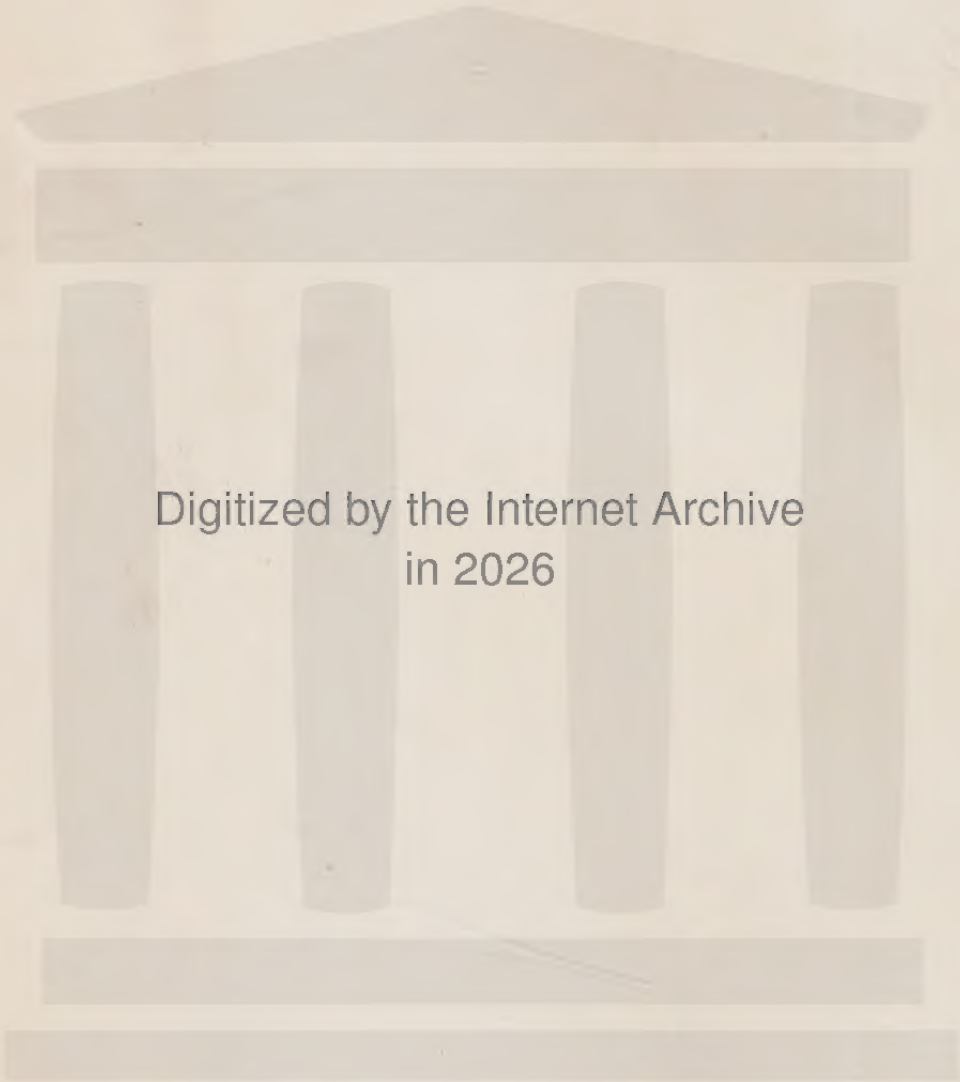
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EARLY ENGLAND

UP TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

BY

FREDERICK YORK POWELL

FORMERLY REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY
AND FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE
OXFORD

WITH FOUR MAPS

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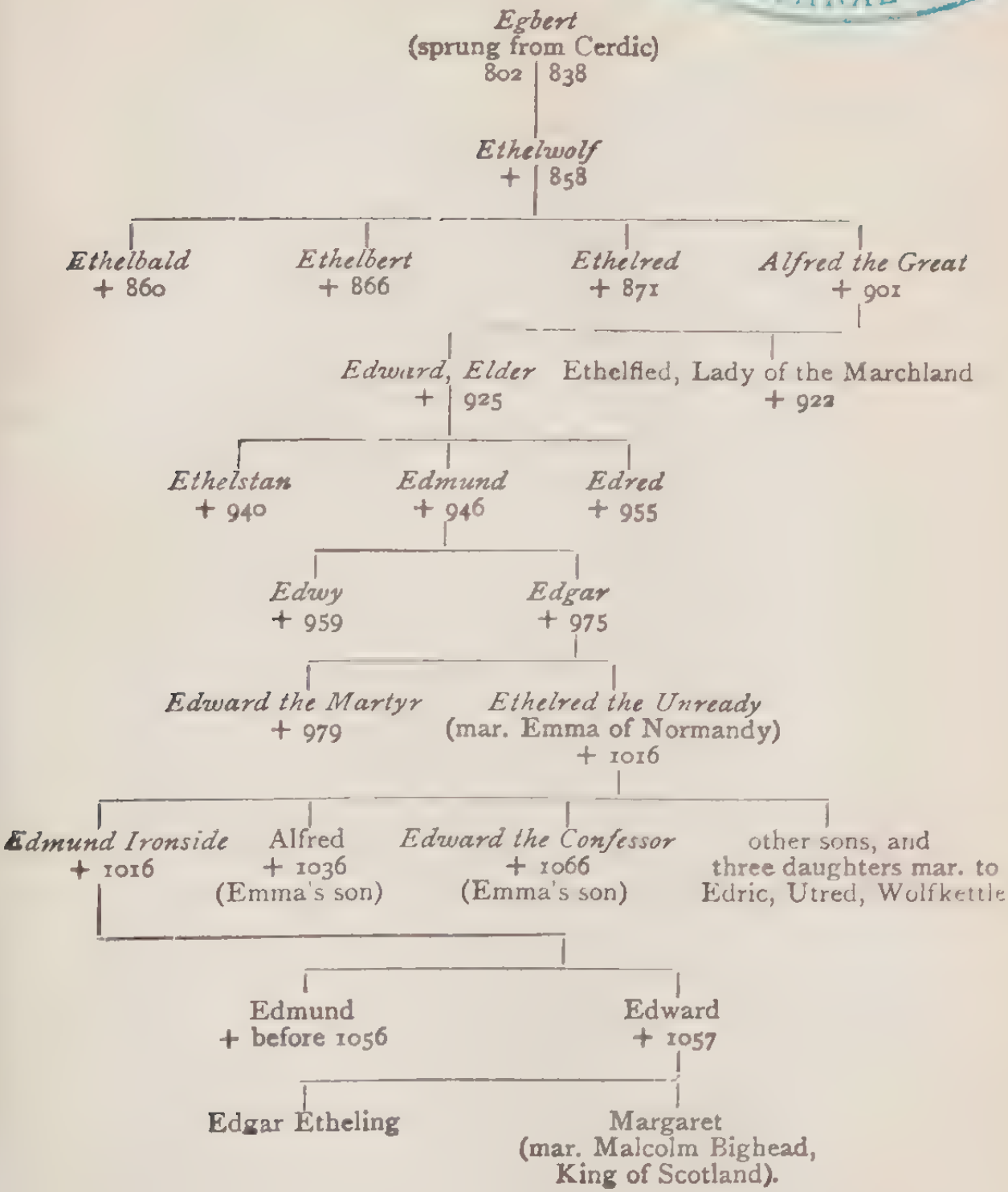

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    - *Harold Harefoot* + 1040
    - *Hardi-Canute* (son of Emma) + 1042
    - Gunhild (dtr. of Emma) (mar. Emp. Henry III.)
- Gunhild (mar. Pallig)

THE HOUSE OF GODWIN.

Godwin
(mar. *Canute's* sister-in-law Gytha)
+ 1053

- Edith (m. *Edward Confessor*)
- Sweyn +c. 1053
- *Harold* (m. Edith, Elfgar's dtr.) + 1066
- Tostig (m. Judith, Baldwin's dtr.) + 1066
- Gurth + 1066
- Leofwin + 1066
- Wolfnoth

THE HOUSE OF LEOFRIC.

Leofric
Elfgar

- Edith (mar. 1. Griffith, King of Wales 2. *Harold Godwinson*).
- Edwin
- Morcar

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THE HOUSE OF SIWARD.

Siward the Big
(brother-in-law of *Duncan*, K. of Scots)
+ 1055

- Osbern
  + 1053
- Waltheof
  (mar. Judith, William Conqueror's niece)
  + 1075
  - Maud
    (mar. 1. Simon of St. Lis
    2. *David*, K. of Scots, *Duncan's* grandson).

THE HOUSE OF FLANDERS.

Baldwin I.
(mar. Judith, dghtr. of Charles Bald,
widow of 1. *Ethelwolf*
2. *Ethelbald*)
+ 879

Baldwin II.
(mar. dghtr. of *Alfred the Great*)
+ 918

Arnulf, Bad
+ 965

Baldwin III.
(ruled with his father)
+ 962

Arnulf, Young
+ 988

Baldwin IV., Fairbeard
(mar. Ogive, dghtr. of Richard Good of Normandy)
+ 1036

- *Baldwin V., Kind*
  + 1067
  - *Baldwin VI., Good*
- Judith
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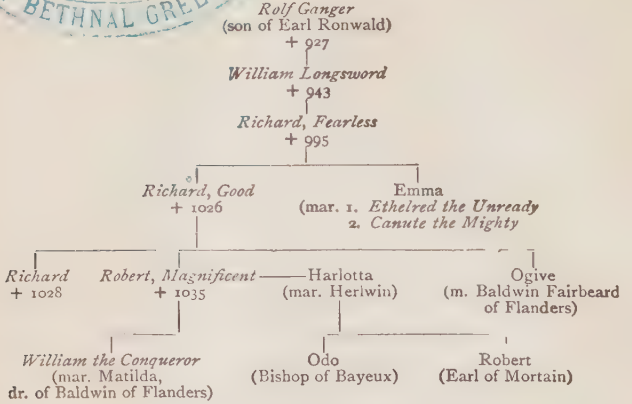
THE HOUSE OF NORMANDY.



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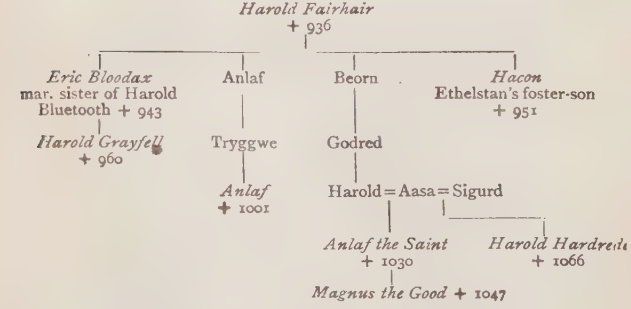

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EARLY ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION.

THE CHIEF THINGS which we have to notice in this part of the History of England are:

1. What this land was like and who dwelt in it before the English came here and called it England.

2. What manner of men the English were, and how they built up the kingdom of England, driving out the folk that dwelt here before them.

3. How this kingdom grew so weak that it was conquered by Norwegian and Danish kings, and by the Norman duke.

BOOK I.

THE BRITONS AND ROMANS

B.C. 55—A.D. 409.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRITONS.

1. WE do not know much of the first dwellers in England, as no history tells us about them; but from the remains of themselves, their tools and weapons, which are sometimes dug up, we have been able to find out something. They were savage people, like the Tasmanian natives, and used rough flint, and bone, and wooden weapons. They were great hunters, and some of them were cannibals. They lived in caves and on the banks of the seas and rivers; and it is in caves, and the great heaps of shells which lie near where their

The first dwellers in England.

huts stood, that we find the bones and remains that tell us about them.

In their days England was much colder than it is now, and much wilder. A great many wild beasts lived here, such as hyænas, lions, rhinoceroses, and elephants, which have long since disappeared.

We do not know when these people came to England, but it must have been a very long while ago.

2. The next people we know as dwelling in these islands, which they called ALBION and IVERNE, long after the older folk, was very different. The land in their time, though not so cold and wild as before, was still very unlike the England of to-day. The greater part of it was covered with thick woods or broad heaths; and where the rivers now run fast there were often great fens and lakes. There were still many wild beasts, bears, wolves, and beavers, great elks and wild cattle, though most of those we spoke of before had died out. It was hotter in summer and colder in winter than it is now.

The Ivernians.

They were a rude people, but were not wild savages, like the first folk. They were not unlike the modern Esquimaux in build. They had long-shaped skulls and oval faces, their hair and eyes were dark. They were neither tall nor big of bone. They wore dark raiment. They have left descendants in parts of Scotland and Ireland and in South Wales; in Cornwall and Devon, in the western English counties and the north Midlands, as well as in Belgium and Brittany across the Channel. They had weapons of *polished* stone, and were good bowmen. They kept cattle, sheep, and goats and swine: they tamed horses instead of hunting them for food, as the older people had done. They lived on milk and flesh of their beasts, and on the grain they grew, and on the nuts and wild fruit they gathered in the huge woods that covered the greater part of the lower lands. They knew the use of pottery, but not of metal. They lived in

wattled huts half-sunk in the ground, without windows or chimneys. These huts were set together in villages, which had often a wooden paling and earthen wall round them, and were placed in the midst of woods, or on islands in the rivers or marshes, or on hills, so as to be safer against foemen. They dealt by barter, not striking or using metal money yet, though they had learnt to till the ground near their villages, and grew barley. They were great hunters, but they did not fish in the sea. They were much given to witchcraft and worshipped their gods with zeal. The dead they wished to honour they buried under long oval heaps of earth, which still remain in parts of this country. In the south and west of Britain they worked to find tin and lead, and sold the metal to the Phœnicians, who were the great merchants of that day and the first civilised folk who knew of Britain.

They dwelt alone in the land for a long while, but at last there came a new people from the West across the North Sea, tall, big-boned, round-headed, fair-skinned, and decked with amber and jet, who brought with them the knowledge of gold and bronze working and of weaving cloth. They settled in the east of Albion and mingled with the older inhabitants, gaining dominion over them in many parts. They were not unlike the Finns, and they burnt their dead, but what their speech was we know not.

3. Not very long after these there came from the mainland another people, the KELTS. They were wiser and abler, with better weapons and greater knowledge, than their forerunners. They won all these islands, save some parts where the older people still held their own.

These KELTS came in two waves, as it were; first the *Gaels*, whose speech holds in Ireland, Man, and the Highlands; next the *Britons*, whose tongue the Welsh still keep and the Bretons-over-sea. Of the Britons, the last to come were the Belgians, that dwelt in the plain where Winchester now stands. The Gaels and Britons

did not differ very widely in customs or speech. They worshipped gods of the sea and of war, and of the arts. They buried the ashes of their dead chiefs in huge round barrows, more carefully made than those of the tall people that came before them.

The Britons kept up much traffic with their kinsfolk in Gaul. They had horses, which they only used for war, when they drove them in chariots; and they had dogs like large deerhounds, which they used for hunting. The Britons were very clever at all kinds of basket-work, and knew how to make pottery for household use, and large earthenware vessels in which they buried their dead. They did not know at first how to work iron, but used flint and bone and horn and bronze for their weapons and tools, like the people before them. When they could, they bought fine bronze swords and axes from Gaul. They used also to carve jet ornaments.

They were tall, big people, and many of them had blue eyes and light hair. They had long-shaped heads. They let their hair grow, and the men wore large moustachios, but shaved their beards. The men were clad in linen shirts and hose and large cloaks of plaid, and the women had gowns and mantles of the same stuff. In war the men used to throw off their cloaks and rush into battle half-naked, painted blue with the juice of a herb called woad, just as is the habit of some savages now. They fought with long swords and knives and darts. Their shields were of wood covered with hide and strengthened with metal.

4. They were brave in battle, but were never long of one mind, and so their bravery availed them little. They did not live together as a nation under one rule, as we see the peoples of Europe do now, but they were divided into tribes. Each tribe had its own chief and followed its own customs. These tribes were always at war with each other, and this was one great cause of the misfortunes that fell upon them.

Their government.

The chiefs and kings of these tribes could not do as they liked. When any great thing was to be done, the free men of the tribe were all called together to consider it, and what they wished was done ; but the chiefs led them to war, and had much power over them in peace-time.

From them these islands came to be called the Britannic Islands. The people that they found here before them are often called *Picts*. The Keltic tongue and rule spread, and the Kelts lived on for a good while untroubled save by wars among themselves or with the older nations. In those days Pytheas, the Greek traveller from Marseilles, visited Britain, and wrote down what he heard and saw there. He told of the barley in South Britain, and of the beer the Britons brewed from it, and of their metheglin, a drink made of wheat and honey, and of the tin trade. He also spoke of the fogs and the ice and the Northern lights.

The Britons cleared much of the land, and cut roads from one to another of their great forts, that stood on hills or by rivers, ringed about with huge earthworks, often threefold, and palisaded with wooden walls. Many of these hill or river forts have grown into our towns and cities of to-day.

5. We do not know how or when all these tribes came to Britain, though there are some stories in old Irish and Welsh books about their coming. Nor do we know whether the savages who first dwelt in the land had all died out when they came ; but it is very likely they had. We only know for certain that the Ivernians came from the south of Europe long before the Keltic tribes (Gaels and Britons), who landed on the east coast of Britain c. 500 B.C. and drove the Ivernians into the corners of the land. The Belgians came here only about 100 years before the birth of Christ.

Their coming into Britain.

Some of the Britons and Gaels held strange beliefs. They kept a set of men whom they called Druids, who were both prophets, priests, and teachers. They had

great power among the western tribes, but in the east do not seem to have had so much weight. They taught men about the gods, and said that the soul of a man never died, but that after death it passed through other bodies, so that the wicked would be punished and the good rewarded by what happened to them in the different bodies their souls passed through. They also offered cruel sacrifices of men and beasts to their gods. If a man disobeyed them, he was not allowed to assist at the offerings, but was cast out of his tribe and from the abodes of men. The Druids had no temples, but worshipped their gods in dark oak groves or on high hills.

Religion.

The Druids also in their schools taught bands of scholars all that they knew about the stars, the healing powers of herbs, and the old songs and stories of the tribes. The chiefs and people asked the Druids' advice on all things, and gave them gifts and a great part of the spoil which they won in war. The Druids were held as holy men, and no man dare hurt or rob one.

In many places in England there are still standing large stones set up in circles or rows. Who set them up we do not know, but that they have been there a very long time is certain. There is a story told of a double stone circle, perhaps the most famous of all, Stonehenge, that it was set up by the Britons, about 460 A.D., over some of their chiefs who were treacherously slain. But as the bigger ring at Stonehenge is made of hewn stones, very likely, if this tale be true, these Britons merely copied the work of a much earlier age, and perhaps even of an earlier race.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROMAN CONQUEST.

1. Now, the mightiest folk in the world, about the time we begin to hear much about the Britons, were the Romans, who had conquered all the nations round the

Mediterranean. Their greatest man fifty-five years before the birth of Christ was Caius Julius Cæsar, who had been fighting in Gaul, and had beaten all the Gaulish tribes from the Gulf of Marseilles to the Channel. He determined to come over to Britain because the Belgians of South Britain had sent help to their kinsmen the Belgians in Gaul, with whom he was fighting. So Cæsar set sail for Britain with a small army. When the Britons, who were watching for him, saw his fleet draw near the shore, they came down and kept the Romans from landing, till a brave standard-bearer leapt from the galley into the water among the Britons. When the Roman soldiers saw him in the midst of their foes, they followed him to save the standard, and at last made good their landing and drove the Britons up into the country. Then Cæsar marched through most of the land of the people of Kent, fought several battles, and forced the tribes near him to give hostages and make peace. But he was not able to profit by his success. He was afraid of the bad weather in the Channel, for it was getting late in the year. So he went back to Gaul.

Cæsar's first coming. B.C. 55.

2. But when Cæsar was gone the Britons did not do as they had promised him ; so he came again next summer into Britain with a larger army than before. But the tribes of the south-east had united under a brave prince, named Cassivellamnos (whom the Romans called Cassivelaunus), and resisted the invaders very boldly. But the good order of the Romans overcame them at last. After several battles Cassivelaunus' stronghold, Verulam (St. Albans), was taken and burnt. The Britons therefore were again forced to make peace. But the Romans, when they found what a poor country Britain was, and that there was no rich plunder and much hard fighting, were not inclined to stay longer. Cæsar, too, had succeeded in frightening the Britons from interfering further with his plans in

Cæsar's second coming. B.C. 54.

Gaul. He could not afford to stay himself, as he wanted to keep watch over his new conquests in Gaul, and did not wish to be too far from Rome. So the Romans went back again, and when Cæsar was next in Rome he hung up a corslet of British pearls in the temple of his goddess, Venus, as a memorial of his victories.

After Cæsar left, the Britons were left to themselves for about ninety years. They still kept up their trade with Gaul, which was now a Roman province, and they now coined much money, copying the Greek and Roman money which they saw used in trade; for before they had mostly used metal rings and cattle instead of money.

Once during this time the Roman Emperor Caius, surnamed Caligula, gathered together a large army with which to conquer Britain. He marched as far as the coast of Gaul, facing Britain, but he never crossed the Channel, and the only spoils he brought back to Rome were pebbles and shells from the seashore.

3. In the reign of Claudius, the fourth Roman Emperor, a Roman general was sent with an army of Romans and Gauls. He landed in the south, and after much hard fighting Vectis (the Isle of Wight) was taken, and the whole of South Britain submitted to Claudius, who came over to receive the new conquest. Camulodun (Colchester) was taken and settled with Roman soldiers, and became a Roman town. South Britain was taken under the Roman rule, and was made a part of the Roman empire, as Gaul had been. These conquered lands were governed by officers sent out by the Emperor.

The conquest of Britain. A.D. 43.

4. But in the north and midst of Britain, Caratacos (whom later writers call Caractacus) still held out against the Romans. After fighting bravely he was at last overcome and driven to seek shelter with his mother-in-law, who betrayed him to the Romans to gain their favour, and he was taken cap-

Caratacos. A.D. 47.

tive to Rome, with his wife and children. When he saw the splendid buildings and all the glory of the great city, he said to the Emperor, 'How is it that you who dwell in such grand palaces envy us poor Britons our thatched cots?' And the Emperor, who was pleased with his boldness and bravery, treated him kindly at the prayer of the Empress. Nevertheless, the Silures, though they had lost their great leader, would not yield, and the Roman general is said to have died of grief and rage at not being able to subdue them.

Suetonius Paullinus and Boadicea. A.D. 59–62.

5. Some years after, while Nero was Emperor, Suetonius Paullinus was appointed governor in Britain. In A.D. 61 he resolved to go over to Mona (Anglesey), which was a sacred island of the Druids, and subdue it. For they had received there many of the Britons who had fled from the Roman conquerors. The Druids resisted him stoutly. The very women withstood the landing of his troops, and at one time nearly drove them back, frightened at the strange sight and the dreadful noises and the witchcraft of the Druids. There were great fires lit along the shore and many women with torches rushing to and fro shrieking, while the Druids called on their gods with loud cries to help their warriors and overthrow their foes. At last, however, the Romans landed and took the island, cut down the groves, and slew the Druids, casting them into the fires which they had kindled to burn their captives in. This is noteworthy, because the Romans hardly ever tried to destroy or change the faith of any folk whom they conquered. They did so in the Druids' case because they saw that if the Druids were allowed to teach their faith and rouse the Britons against them they could never govern the country quietly.

While Suetonius was away, the Iceni and their queen, Boudicca (whom many writers call Boadicea), rose against the Romans, who were left nearly defenceless.

Boadicea was the widow of a king of the Icenians, who had been a friend of the Romans, and had given them some of his possessions. But when he died, the Romans seized the inheritance of his daughters, and when Boadicea protested, she was seized and scourged, and her daughters were treated in the cruellest way. All the Britons who had suffered any wrong at the hands of the Romans joined her, and she soon had a great host under her. She burnt London and Camulodun (Colchester) and other Roman settlements, and slew every living soul therein, both Romans and Britons who had taken up Roman ways. One Roman general tried to resist her, but he was routed and driven into his camp. Then arose a great panic in all the Roman settlements. All who could fled south before the Britons, and many even crossed to Gaul. But at length news of all that was happening was brought to Suetonius, and he marched back with a large army to fight Boadicea, and came up with her and set his forces in order against her. And Boadicea, in a war-chariot, with her daughters, went through her army when it was in battle array. She wore a helmet on her long fair hair and a gold collar on her neck, and bore war-weapons in her hand, and she prayed her people to fight bravely and avenge her wrongs and their own. But when the battle was joined the Romans, after a hard fight, won the day. For a long time the Britons would not flee, and the Romans slew them nearly all on the field ; but Boadicea took poison, fearing capture worse than death. With this defeat the revolt ceased, and the country, though fearfully wasted, was at peace. Now when Nero heard of the great revolt and the causes of it, he recalled Suetonius and sent out another governor in his room.

6. When Vespasian was Emperor of Rome he sent a very wise governor to Britain, Julius Agricola, who had served under Suetonius fifteen years before. He was the

father-in-law of Tacitus, the great historian, who wrote his life, from which we learn a good deal about Britain at this time. Agricola won all South Britain for the Romans. And when he found that the Caledonians (as the wild tribes of the North were called) were always harrying the lands of those Britons who had submitted to the Romans, he built a line of forts against them across the island, between the Forth and the Clyde, and garnished it with soldiers. In the last year of his government he marched north, and fought a battle with the Caledonians, which he won, though their king, Calgacos or Galgacos, led them bravely. Soon after this Agricola was recalled to Rome. Seven years he governed Britain, and he was not only famous as a general, but loved for his able and mild sway. He tried to get the Britons to take up Roman ways and customs, and sought to teach the sons of the chiefs the Roman language and wisdom. By showing the Britons that good as well as evil was to be got from their Roman rulers, he brought them to live peacefully under them. He did not even try to conquer the Caledonians, for their country was very wild and poor, but only wished to make them leave the Roman subjects in peace. Agricola sent his fleet round Britain to survey the coasts and see what the country to the far north was like. From their voyage we have the first Roman accounts of the geography of North Britain.

Agricola and Galgacos. A.D. 78–85.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROMAN RULE IN BRITAIN.

1. WHEN Hadrian became Emperor of Rome (A.D. 121), he went round his empire and put all the borders in a state of defence. When he came to Britain, he built a wall from the Tyne to Solway Firth, and made it the boundary of the province. But some years later, when Antonine was

Hadrian and Antonine's walls. A.D. 121–140.

THE TRIBES OF BRITAIN.

The Romans called all the people that dwelt in Britain *Britons*: but, as we have seen, they were not all of one race.

The IVERNIANS of Scotland and North and West Ireland and the SILURES of South Wales were not akin to the other folks, but rather perhaps to the *Basks*, who dwell in Spain and the South of France to this day, having been driven into corners of the land by the invasion of the Keltic tribes, who called those they found here PICTS.

Who the Finnlike people were, we do not know. The *Parisii* were perhaps of them.

The other tribes were KELTIC. Of these, some tribes were *Gaels*, and spoke a tongue spoken by the Irish and Highlanders of our times. These were the

Scots of Ireland
Damnonians, rightly *Dumnonii*
And the tribes of North Wales, Galloway, Man, and Mid-Scotland.

The *Welsh* or *Cymric* tribes are the same folk as the Welsh people of to-day. These were the

Brigantes
Ordovices
Coritanians [perhaps a Pictish tribe by blood]
Trinobantes or *Trinovantes*
*Iceni*ans, rightly *Eceni*ans
Cantians
Belgians.

——— marks the Roman roads.
------- the divisions of the tribes.

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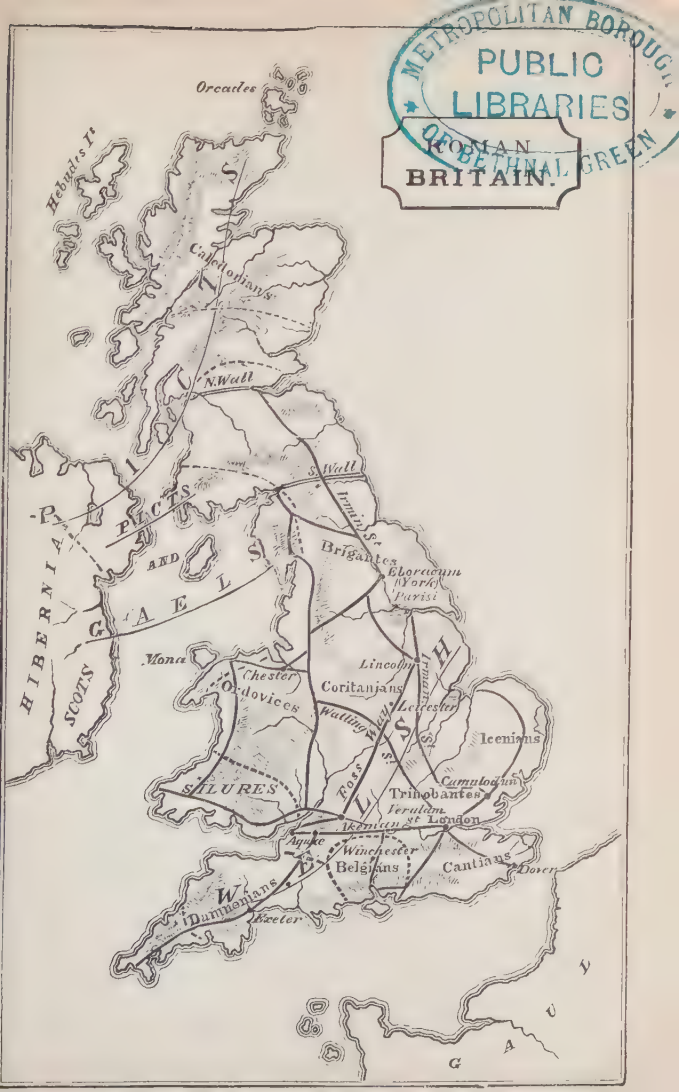
ROMAN BRITAIN.



Emperor, the governor of Britain built a wall where Agricola's line of forts were, and got back the land between the walls. Pieces of these two walls remain to this day.

2. Nevertheless the Caledonians, or Picts, as they were now called, were always making raids southward, until the Roman governors took to buying them off. This only made them come the oftener. At last the Emperor himself had to be sent for. His name was Severus; he was an old man, but very wise and brave. He was too ill to ride, and was borne in a litter at the head of his army. He marched right through North Britain to the Pentland Firth; and though he lost a great part of his army through the bad weather and rough ground and the continual fighting, yet he made the Caledonians beg for peace and took away a great part of their land. When he had had the earthen wall of Hadrian strengthened with a wall of stone, he was carried back to Eboracum (York), the capital of Britain, and there he died.

Severus. A.D. 210.

3. About seventy years after this new foes began to trouble the Romans. These were the Scots, a tribe from the north of Ireland, which they called Scotia. These Scots now ravaged the west and north of Britain.

The Scots, A.D. 286; the English, A.D. 290.

The east also of Britain was laid waste by the attacks of SAXON sea-rovers from the north coasts of Germany. This is the first time we hear of independent Englishmen coming to Britain, though many men from Germany had been in Britain as soldiers in the Roman armies.

4. The next great man we hear of in Britain was Constantine, who afterwards became Emperor. His mother was a British princess. He was the first Emperor who made the Christian faith the faith of the Roman Empire. He became a Christian himself, and after him all the Emperors save one were Christians. We hear of British Christians before. When

Constantine and Christianity.

there was a persecution in A.D. 303, it is said that many were put to death in Britain for the faith, for the Emperor believed the Christians to be traitors, and persecuted them. Alban, who was slain at Verulam, is said to have been the first martyr who died in Britain. In after days the great monastery of S. Albans arose at Verulam, where he was slain. Now this bringing in of Christianity is one of the most important things that the Roman rule did for Britain. Christianity also gave the Roman Empire new strength for a while. Through the conversion of the German tribes, a very different fate befell the Roman Empire and the people under it than would have overtaken them had the Germans been still heathen.

5. After the days of Constantine, in spite of all that the Romans could do, things got worse. At last the Picts and Scots ravaged the whole of Britain as far as London. They were driven out by Theodosius, who got back the country between the walls and called it Valentia, in honour of Valentinian, who was then Emperor. And so he gave the land peace for a while.

The leaving of the Romans. A.D. 409.

Soon after this the heart of the Roman Empire was invaded by the German tribes, who at length overthrew it altogether in the West of Europe, and the Emperors could not do much to keep the far-off provinces safe, for they wanted all their troops nearer home. As legion after legion went away, the Britons were at last left to themselves. Once or twice a legion was sent back for a while to help them against their heathen foes, but at length no more help could be got. Though the Britons, especially those who lived in the towns and had learned Roman ways, had been weakened by their best men being away in the Roman armies, yet they levied soldiers after the Roman fashion, and defended themselves stubbornly. Especially they tried to keep the walls. But

what had been their bane before was so again, for the chief men who now ruled Britain fell out among themselves. Many did evil deeds, and some even called in the Picts and Scots against their brethren. At last, it is said, Gwerthigern (or Vortigern), who was the Duke of all Britain, resolved to copy the plan the Romans had used. They had kept off the Germans a long time by playing off one lot of barbarians against another. So he called two English chiefs, brothers—Hengist and Horsa by name—to help him against the Picts and Scots.

6. The Romans had been four hundred years in Britain when they left, and had made great changes in the land. They were great builders and engineers. Besides the camps and walls, they had built many walled towns, with houses of brick and stone, and large temples and churches, and theatres, and public baths. The villas or country-houses of the great men too were splendidly painted and paved. It was through their walls that the towns came off better in the conquest by the English than the rest of the country.

What changes the Romans wrought.

The Romans made good roads across the country, running straight from town to town, and it was on these roads that all the traffic of England was carried on and soldiers marched in the wars, till the cutting of canals and the invention of railways. Moreover, if the map of England of to-day is compared with the map of Roman Britain, we see that the railways often follow the line of the Roman roads. The Romans also taught the Britons many other arts. They also worked mines of iron and lead and tin, and made fine pottery and glass. So much corn was grown in Britain that it was called the 'Granary of the North.' Much trade also was carried on at London. Horses and big British dogs were sent from Britain all over the Roman Empire.

But still we see that Britain never became quite Roman, as Gaul did. The Britons of West Britain still

kept up their old speech and customs, although they learned much from the Romans and had better weapons and tools than before. This is why the Welsh still speak their own tongue, and not a Romance tongue (that is, a tongue learnt from the Romans), as the French and Spaniards do. For the people of Gaul and Spain, and probably of East Britain, learned the speech of the Romans, though they changed it in speaking it, according to their own tongues and ways of talking.

The population of Britain in the 4th century numbered about 1,000,000, of which 22,000 were Roman troops. There were perhaps 20,000 more foreigners, merchant colonists and officials.

BOOK II.

HOW THE ENGLISH WON BRITAIN.

A.D. 409–600.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH.

1. WHEN we first hear of the English, they lived in the land along the coast of the North Sea between North Denmark and Holland. They belonged to the same race as the Norwegians and Danes, and the Franks and Saxons, who dwelt to the south of them. Whence the English had come to their home on the North Sea (for they had not dwelt there many centuries) we know not.

Who the English were.

2. They were not a savage people, but a nation of yeomen, living each in his own homestead, tilling the ground and keeping cattle. They did not dwell in towns, but men of the same kin lived together in little knots of farms. They called these villages after the name of the kin that dwelt in it, as Ashingham, the home of the Ashings, or sons of Ash.

Their government.

Each village managed its own affairs; but once or twice a year all the gentle-folk and free landholders went up to a great meeting, when the business of the nation was settled. This was called the *folk-moot* or

meeting of the tribe. Ten or twelve villages were grouped into a *hundred*, so-called because in old times it held a hundred and twenty free households. Every *hundred* had a *hundred-moot*, which met three or four times a year,

and settled matters that were of small account and only concerned those who lived in that *hundred*. The men of the tribe were either gentle or simple, *eorls* or *ceorls*, that is, either of noble birth or just simply free men. The gentlemen were looked up to, and unlanded free men were of small account. There were slaves, too, whom they called *thralls*, who used to work for the free men. They were fairly treated, especially when they were not foreigners, or men who had lost their freedom through debt or wrong-doing, but captives from some tribe akin to their masters.

There were no kings among the old Saxons; but when they went to war they chose leaders whom they swore to obey. Some of their gentlefolk, whom they called elders or *aldermen*, acted as magistrates, and sat in the chief places in their meetings and presided over their affairs. The great men, too, kept many free followers about them, who used to guard them and fight for them, to whom they gave rings of gold and silver, and sometimes farms and cattle. Young gentlemen used to take service with nobles that they might win riches and honour.

3. The English were a very warlike race, and were often fighting against the neighbouring tribes in Germany and Denmark. They were good seamen too. In the spring, before the summer field-work came on, and in the autumn, after the harvest was carried, they used to sail out and plunder all round the coasts of the North Sea. It is said that it was while Hengist and Horsa were on one of these voyages that they were asked to help Vortigern against his foes. Their manners.

When the whole people went to war, one grown man at least from every free household had to go to the meeting-place and fight under the great men who were chosen as war-leaders, and led them to battle, beside their guards.

And when the tribe conquered any land or spoil, it was dealt out by lot, a share to every free man, after the share

of the gods had been taken. But the chiefs had bigger shares than other men, because they had to reward their followers, who did not take a lot like the rest, but looked to the chief for their share.

The English were just folks and loved the law. They used to settle many disputes at their meetings, where every one who was wronged could bring his complaint, which was judged by the people there, and the evildoers were punished. But if a man liked, he could always fight against him who had wronged him, or against his kin, and so seek redress for himself by main force. Evildoers were fined, and if they could not pay, were put out of the law's protection, and any man who would might slay an outlaw without being punished. There was a price fixed for every man's life according to his rank, which, if a man were slain unlawfully, was paid to his kinsfolk by his slayer. This was called the *were-gild*, or price of a man. But those who had slain men secretly and done the worst deeds were hanged or drowned, as sacrifices to the gods they had offended.

Like most of their race, the English showed much respect to women, and the housewife had the ordering of the house and the women-servants. The husband might not interfere in those matters, but he ruled in all greater things. The English, too, were kind to their children, and treated them as men and women when they were grown up; and did not keep them, as the Romans and Britons kept theirs, in strict obedience all their lives.

The free men were well armed with swords and spears of bronze and iron, and shields of linden-wood. The chiefs often had mail-shirts of iron rings and helmets of metal, with the image of a wild boar on the top as a crest. For their every-day wear they were well clad in linen or woollen raiment, and the rich folk wore red and blue embroidered gowns or tunics, and cloaks clasped with bronze brooches often beautifully

Arms and dress.

wrought, and great gold and silver rings on their arms. They were shod in leather, and wore leathern belts round their waists with a sheath-knife in them, as the Norwegians do now. The married ladies wore a bunch of keys at their waist. When the free man went from home, he used always to bear his sword and shield, and when he rode on horseback he would carry a spear also. The men used to tattoo their arms and breasts with curious patterns, as our sailors often do still. All free men and women wore their hair long and were proud of it, but the thralls' heads were cropped. Married women always wore a kerchief or veil over their hair.

They were good smiths and carpenters at all kinds of work in metal and wood. The women were clever at all kinds of needlework, and wove fine white linen. The English built wooden houses, and the chiefs had great halls. They were also good ship-builders, and their large barges, which they called 'keels,' would withstand the fierce storms of the North Sea. They had plenty of horses, and dogs, and cattle, and sheep. They used horses for war and for travelling, but for farm-work oxen.

Though the English worked hard they were a merry folk, fond of singing and feasting. There were good poets among them. They loved sports, such as hunting and wrestling and hurling and horse-racing, and took pleasure in gambling.

5. The English had no Druids, like the Britons, but every man was priest in his own household, and the chief was priest for the tribe. In some places they had women priests and soothsayers. Their temples were deep in the woods or on lonely islands, or at the meeting-places of the people. Thither they used to bring a great part of their spoil, and burn or bury it in honour of the gods. Sometimes the English offered men in sacrifice to the gods to gain victory or good luck or long life. Sometimes sick men would slay themselves,

Religion.

that they might not die in bed, but by the sword, like men slain in battle.

Their gods were Thunder the lightning god, and Mother Hertha, and Tew the god of war, and Woden the wise helper, and Freya the fair, and Eager of the sea, and the white Balder. Some of these gods' names we still keep in the days of the week,—as Tuesday and Wednesday, the days of Tew and Woden. In their temples the holy symbol was kept, on which men swore oaths to tell the truth at trials, or vowed before they went to battle to fight bravely. These temples were hallowed, and no man dared fight or quarrel in them. The English faith was that if a man did his duty honestly to himself and his family and his tribe, and fought his foes and bore trouble and danger steadfastly without flinching, his soul would dwell with his kinsmen's spirits, passing the day feasting with them in his *barrow* or in the caverns of the hills, and his nights fighting and hunting over the earth. But if a man was cruel or base or cowardly, they thought Death would bring him to the dark goddess Hell, in cold caverns full of serpents, in the midst of ice and snow.

When a great man died, his tribesmen used to raise a pile of firewood on some high place and set his body on it, with his sword in his hand and his helmet on his head and his shield by his side, and his horse under him. Then they slew the horse and burnt its body with its master's The ashes they put in an urn of earthenware, which they covered round with huge stones. Then they heaped a high round mound or *barrow* of earth over it as a mark for ever. Sometimes a man's wife and slaves were slain and buried with him. But some of the English buried their dead without burning them. It is from their graves in England and abroad that we have found out a great deal about our forefathers.

The English knew how to write; but they had no

books, and only used writing to mark their weapons and houses and boats and rings and cups with.

6. There were Englishmen out of three nations who came to Britain, but the Welsh and Irish called them all Saxons. The first nation, which dwelt in the north of Denmark and over the west and south of Sweden, were called *Jutes*, or Geats. The next, who dwelt in the south of Denmark and in what is now called Slesvik Holsten, called themselves *Angles*, or *English*. The southernmost nation, who dwelt in Friesland and Hanover, were called *Saxons*. It was because the Welsh met with them first that they called all Englishmen Saxons. Very often people have been called by another name than that by which they call themselves; thus the Romans called all the tribes that dwelt in Britain *Britons*, but the Britons called themselves by the names of their tribes, or, when they wished to speak of all their race, they called themselves *Cymry*, 'comrades.' But the English called them 'Welsh' or Strangers, as the Germans now call the Italians 'Welsh.' Still it is to be kept in mind that they did not call themselves by that name.

Tribes of English.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST.

1. THE English under their two leaders, Hengist and Horsa (Horse and Mare), agreed to help Vortigern, and they fought for the Welsh against the Picts, and won several battles. But, just as had happened before in other parts of the Roman Empire, the plan of using one foe against another failed. The English quarrelled with the Welsh, and sent over-sea for more of their kinsfolk, telling them what a good land Britain was, and how badly it was guarded. So many more came over, with their wives and children and cattle. They settled first in Thanet island, whence they came over into Kent to conquer it, that they might dwell there.

The Jutes win Kent. A.D. 451.

The Welsh fought against them, but the English won. In one of their fights Horsa was slain, and his folk raised a great mound of earth over his burying-place, which may still be seen. At last the Welsh fled out of the land of Kent, and the English made two kingdoms there, and set up Hengist and his kin as kings to rule over them.

2. Not long after this a band of Saxons under a leader named Ella landed in the South of Britain, near Regnum (Chichester); and they fought against the Welsh and set up a little kingdom. But the great Roman town Anderida (Pevensey), at the end of the South Downs, long held out against them; but they took it at last, and slew every soul within it and made it a waste (A.D. 491). This kingdom of Ella was afterwards called the kingdom of the South Saxons or Sussex.

The Saxons of Sussex. A.D. 477.

3. Another band of Saxons landed at Portsmouth and fought against the Welsh, and took the city of Winchester, and made the kingdom of the West Saxons, or Wessex, in the land that is now called Hampshire. And they set their leader Cerdic as king over them, of whose blood nearly all the kings and queens that ruled over all England have come.

The Saxons of Wessex. A.D. 495.

So the South of Britain was conquered, and from Wessex there afterwards went out bands of settlers to the west and north, and drove out the Welsh and founded Dorset and Wiltset. Their leaders obeyed the king of Wessex. But these settlers did not win their way easily, and it was not till 577 that the West Saxons got to the Bristol Channel. In that year their king Ceawlin won a battle at Dyrham and got Bath city. He founded Somerset, and cut off the Welsh of Cornwall from their kinsfolk the Welsh of Wales. About the same time the West Saxons conquered the valley of the Severn, and sat down in the lands which are now called Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

4. In 547 the Angles, who had for some time been

trying to settle in Britain, began to build up three kingdoms along the east coast. One, Bernicia, the 'land of the Brigantes,' stretched from the north of what we call Yorkshire to the Firth of Forth, and from the coast of the North Sea to the Vale of Clyde and the hills of Cumberland. The second, Deira, 'the water land,' spread from the south of Bernicia to the Humber, and ran back to the Pennine Hills. These were called North English or Northumbrian kingdoms. The third great kingdom, which they called East Anglia, or East England, lay farther south. It had two divisions—the North folks' and South folks' lands (Norfolk and Suffolk).

The English in Northumberland and East England.

5. Two other Saxon bands came up the Thames in their ships and made the two kingdoms of the East Saxons (Essex) and the Middle Saxons (Middlesex), of which the two chief towns were the old Roman cities of Colchester and London.

Essex and Middlesex.

6. Still fresh bands of English came to Britain; and when they found all the land to the east and south taken, they went on past the Eastern kingdom into the middle of Britain. Little by little they won it all from the Welsh as far as the Severn Valley, and they called their kingdom Middle England, but the other folk called it the March or border land, because they dwelt next the Welsh. And when they grew strong they took the Saxons who dwelt in the Severn Valley into their rule. Their chief city was Leicester.

Marchland, or Mercia.

The Saxons also made settlements in Gaul as well as in Britain, and many villages round Bayeux and Calais still keep their old Saxon names. But of the history of these Saxons in Gaul we do not know much.

Now, these conquests took a very long time—over 150 years. For the Welsh, divided among themselves as they were, yet resisted the English very stubbornly, and still held a great part of Britain.

The PICTS.

The KELTIC peoples :—

Scots (Gaels from Ireland).

Welsh :

W. 1. Kingdom of *Cumberland* and *Clyde Valley.*
W. 2. Kingdom of *Wales, or Cambria.*
W. 3. *West Wales* (Devon and Cornwall).

The ENGLISH Kingdoms :—

The *Jutes :*

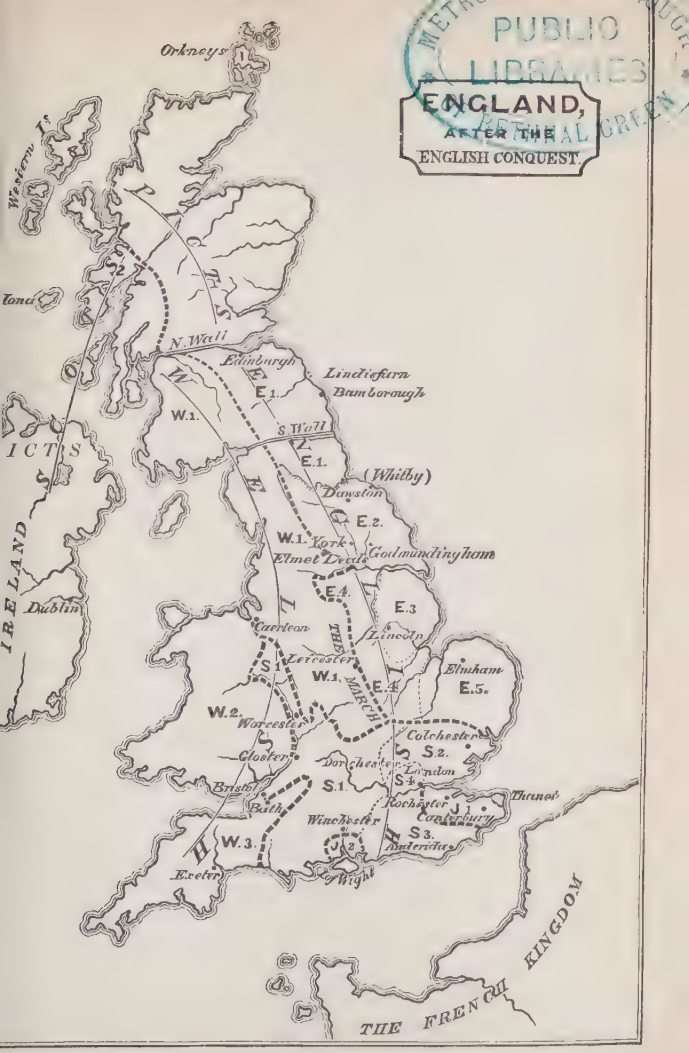
J. 1. Kingdoms of *Kent.*
J. 2. Kingdom of *Isle of Wight*, and *Hants Coast.*

The *Saxons :*

S. 1. *West Saxons*, or *Wessex.*
S. 2. *East Saxons*, or *Essex.*
S. 3. *South Saxons*, or *Sussex.*
S. 4. *Middle Saxons*, or *Middlesex.*

The *English* or *Angles :*

E. 1. *Bernicia*, the land of the Brigantes.
E. 2. *Deira*, the land of the Waters.
(These two made up *Northumberland.*)
E. 3. The Men of *Lindsey* and *Gainsborough.*
E. 4. The *Middle English* Kingdom, *Mercia* or the *Marchland*, that is, land of 'the Border.'
E. 5. The *East English* land.


ENGLAND,
AFTER THE
ENGLISH CONQUEST.
Orkneys
Western Is
Tond
IRELAND
Dublin
N. Wall
Edinburgh
Lindiefarn
Bamborough
W.1.
E.1.
S. Wall
E.1.
(Whitby)
Dawston
E.2.
W.1.
York
Elmet Dreds
Goldmundinyham
E.4.
E.3
Carleton
Lincoln
Leicester
S.1
W.1.
E.4
Elmham
E.5.
W.2.
Worcester
Colchester
S.2.
Gloster
Dorchester
London
S.1.
S.4
Bristol
Rochester
J.1
Thanet
Bath
Canterbury
Winchester
S.3.
Bulerides
W.3.
Exeter
Wight
THE FRENCH KINGDOM

The Welsh kingdom and the Scots.

7. The Welsh had three kingdoms in the west of the island: 1. Cumberland, or the Clyde Valley kingdom, from the Clyde to the Mersey. 2. Wales, or Cambria. 3. West Wales, that is, Devon and Cornwall.

But their chief power lay in the Clyde Valley, in the North, between the Walls. There the great King Arthur is said to have gathered a band of brave warriors and to have fought many battles against the English. But after his death (520) the English could not be checked any longer, and the Welsh had hard work to hold their own in the west. They lost, too, all the land they still held in the east, round Elmet and Leeds, which was added to Mercia and Northumberland.

The English never went beyond the North Wall, but about 550 there came Scots from the North of Ireland into Caledonia and took all the West lands and settled in them. For many years there was war between the Scots and Picts. At last the Picts were forced to take a Scottish king, and Caledonia was called Scotland.

The manner of the conquest.

8. The towns which the Romans had walled and fortified held out longer than the country. Though many of them were taken and destroyed, yet some remained and became the chief towns of the English kingdoms. But it was long before many English folk dwelt in towns, for they still liked farm life best and loved to dwell in the country.

When the English came over to Britain, they brought with them their wives and children and all their goods and cattle. When they won the land, they parcelled it out into groups of farms such as they had in their own country.

Now, as the English were always fighting in their new land, they wanted war-leaders to be always ready to lead them. So they made their aldermen into kings and gave them more power than they had had before.

One cause why the fighting was so fierce was that the English were still heathen, and hated the Christian Welsh, and burnt their churches and slew their priests wherever they could. So the Welsh and English never were at peace; but nearly all the Welsh nobles and gentry in the East were slain or driven into the West, but the poor slaves and peasants stayed behind and were made serfs to the English, and they learnt the English tongue after a while, and forgot the Latin or Welsh they had spoken before.

BOOK III.

CHRISTIANITY IN KENT AND NORTHUMBERLAND.

A.D. 597–685.

CHAPTER I.

CONVERSION OF KENT.

1. IN the year 597 a great thing happened in England —the coming of Christian priests from Rome into Kent, to preach the Gospel to the English. For the English would never learn the Christian faith from the Welsh, though the Welsh had been missionaries to other folks. S. Patrick, a Welshman from the Clyde, had gone to Ireland, and the Irish had gladly taken the faith. S. Ninian had preached to the Picts in the far North. Welsh and Irish preachers went even into Gaul and Germany, for the Irish wished to spread the Gospel which they had received, and it was through them that the Picts were at last turned to the faith.

Welsh missionaries.

2. The English became Christians in another way. There was a king of Kent whose name was Ethelbert, and he took to wife Bertha, the daughter of the Frankish king of Paris, in Gaul. She brought in her train to England a bishop, for her husband had promised that

she should keep her own way of belief. She built up a little church that had been ruined, and used to worship there; but none of the English would leave their old faith.

Pope Gregory and England.

Then came a company of Christian monks from Rome, and at their head one called Augustine. They were sent by Pope Gregory I., and there is a story told of the way by which he came to take such care for the souls of the heathen English. Before he was Pope, about 574, he saw one day for sale in the market of Rome some beautiful children with fair skins and yellow hair; for the Romans kept slaves, and though the English had very few slaves themselves, yet they sometimes sold people abroad into slavery. When Gregory saw the children, he was astonished at their beauty, and asked the dealer who they were. He said they were heathen Angles, or English, from Britain, and Gregory answered, 'They should be angels, they are so fair.' Then he asked who was their king, and the man said 'Ella;' and Gregory said, 'Alleluia should be the song of those Angles, as it is of the angels in heaven.' And he became very sorrowful for pity that such fair folk should dwell in the darkness of sin, and he went to the Pope and prayed him to let him go to England and preach to the English. The Pope gave him leave, but the people of Rome would not let him go, for he was much beloved. But when he became Pope, in 590, he was mindful of the English heathen, and he sent his friend Augustine to England, because he could not now go himself.

3. Augustine came to King Ethelbert and begged him to hearken to his Gospel. The queen was glad of his coming, and the king and his people hearkened to the words of the monks, and in time were baptized. Augustine crossed to Gaul to be made a bishop, that he might govern the Church in Kent. He built up again an old church in Canterbury, the chief

Augustine. A.D. 597.

town of Kent, and called it Christ Church, and made it his cathedral ; and he built an abbey also, and set monks therein. He laboured very hard to spread the Gospel all over England, and Ethelbert helped him much ; for he was a mighty king, and the other kings of the English looked up to him and were glad to win his favour.

4. Once Augustine went to the West to meet the Welsh bishops, to try and get them to help him. They met under a great oak at a place now called Aust, after the name of Augustine ; but the Welsh and Roman priests could not agree ; for though they both professed the Christian faith, yet in many weighty matters they differed. So this meeting came to nothing, and Augustine was very angry with the Welsh because they would not join him in his work. He went on all his life's day trying to make the English Christians, and men called him 'the Apostle of the English.'

Augustine and the Welsh priests.

But though the Kentish men and the kings of East Anglia and Essex were Christian, yet the rest of England was still heathen ; and it was not till the great Northern kingdom was converted that the success of the Christian faith was certain.

CHAPTER II.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

1. WE see England was made up of many little kingdoms ; and it was the same with the Northmen and Danes at this time. But little by little in England, as in Denmark and Norway afterward, one kingdom got power over the others and joined them to itself. For a long time it was not certain which of the little kingdoms would be the one to rule at last. In England Northumberland was the first that tried to become the head kingdom, and it was really so for a while. Afterwards the Marchland took its place, but at last the West Saxon kings, as will be seen, brought about what the others had tried in vain to do.

Rise of Northumberland.

First the rise of Northumberland to power must be told; and it will be seen that this is mixed up greatly with the change of faith that took place in the North.

Perhaps Northumberland rose first because it was the biggest kingdom. Perhaps too the fact that the chief seat of the Roman power had been at York had something to do with it. There was much good land lying together in the North which many men might till.

2. Howbeit there reigned in 593 a king in Northumberland named Ethelfrith, a very mighty man. In his days all the other kings feared Northumberland and did its king's will, save Ethelbert, king of the Kentishmen. Ethelfrith fought against the Scots King Aidan, who had come into his kingdom to help the Welsh princes, and beat them all. The Scots were so discomfited that for many years after they dared not attack the English. This battle was at Dawston by Catterick, in the North.

Ethelfrith. A.D. 593–617.

In 607 Ethelfrith went down into the Welsh country and fought a fierce battle near Chester, and the Welsh fled before his face. In that battle were slain many monks who had come to pray that the Welsh might win the day. Ethelfrith said that although they had not fought, they had tried as hard to defeat him by their prayers as the fighting men had with swords and spears, and he gave orders to slay them. So men said that the words of Augustine were fulfilled when he prophesied evil on the Welsh priests at Aust, because they would not help him in his good work. By this battle Ethelfrith pushed his kingdom to the Western Sea, and cut off Cumberland from the kingdoms of Wales, so that they were never joined again: just as Dyrham battle had cut off Cornwall from the Welsh kingdoms and brought the Welsh Saxons to the British Channel. And now Ethelfrith was still more feared than before. But Redwald, king of the East English, would not give up Edwin to

Ethelfrith, his kinsman, who had outlawed him. So Ethelfrith came against him, and the battle was joined on the banks of the river Idle, and there Ethelfrith fell.

3. Then the outlaw Edwin was made king of Northumberland, and of him many famous stories are told. He became even mightier than Ethelfrith; and though he did not rule over the king of Kent, yet he bade him give him his sister in marriage, and he did so. This, most likely, Edwin did that he might not be stopped in his plans by the men of Kent, now that he and their king were kinsmen. And Edwin sent ships from Chester to fight against the Welsh in Anglesey and Man; and in the North he built a new city on a hill, and it was called Edwin's-borough (Edinburgh) after him. And he had a tall fan of feathers borne before him when he went abroad, and wore a coronet and red robe, and bore a staff after the fashion of the Roman Governors or Dukes, and was called *Brytenwalda*, which means Ruler of the Britons. But the West Saxons hated him; and Cwichelm, their king, sent a servant of his named Eomer with a message of peace to Edwin, but he meant evil. And when Eomer came before the king he suddenly drew a dagger and struck at him. When Lilla, one of Edwin's men, saw him lift his hand he threw himself before the king to shield him, and the blade passed right through Lilla's body, so hard was the blow, and wounded the king. Then the king's followers fell on Eomer and slew him in their wrath; but the king was little hurt, owing to the faithfulness of Lilla.

Edwin. A.D. 617–633.

4. Now Edwin's Kentish wife, Ethelburg, had brought with her a comrade of Augustine's named Paullinus. The very night the king was stabbed, the queen bare a daughter, who was baptized by Paullinus. She was the first Christian child in Northumberland; for the king and his folk were still heathen. But the words of Paullinus and the queen moved the king, and he became a Christian and

Paullinus converts Northumberland. A.D. 627.

his people with him, so that Paullinus was many days baptizing them from morning to night, so many flocked to him desiring to be saved.

Two stories are told of the reasons which moved Edwin's chief men to become Christians.

One of the aldermen, an old and wise man, while the king and his chiefs were talking about the new faith, spoke, and said, 'O King, the life of man which we know on this earth, if we set it by that life which we know not of, seems to me even thus. When you are sitting at meal-tide with your lords in the winter-time, with a great fire lit in the midst of the hall—so that it is warm and bright within, but out of doors the blasts of cold sleet or snow are raging on all sides—sometimes then a sparrow will fly very swiftly through the hall, coming in at one door and going out at the other. While it is in the hall it is at peace and unhurt by the winter storm for a little space; but it flies out again straightway into the cold gloom whence it came, and your eyes behold it no more. So we see for a space the life of man on earth, but what shall follow after or what hath gone before we know not at all. Wherefore, if this new teaching can tell us aught of this, we ought methinks to hearken thereto.'

There was also a priest of the temple at Godmundingham whose name was Coifi. When he heard the words of Paullinus he said to Edwin, 'O King, no man hath served the gods more faithfully than I, seeking the truth, but ever the less I found it. Wherefore, since the gods cannot help us, let us burn their temples and cast down their altars.' Then he prayed the king to give him a horse and lance, and he arose and took them and rode to the temple, and flung the lance over the pale of the temple, where no weapon might come. And the people thought that he was mad, and marvelled, thinking that the gods would surely slay him. But he bade them break down the temple and burn the gods. And when

they saw that he got no harm, they did so, and believed no more in the old gods.

5. Now there was a king in Marchland, or Mercia, named Penda. He and his folk were heathen, and he warred against Edwin. And because Edwin was strong, Penda made peace with the king of the Welsh, Cadwalla; and though Cadwalla was a Christian he joined him out of hatred for the English king, for he claimed to be the true 'Duke of the Britons.' These two kings fought against Edwin and slew him at Heathfield (Hatfield), in the North. When Edwin fell his people forsook the faith and went back to their old gods; and Paullinus and Ethelburg fled to Kent, and many with them. And Cadwalla ruled as Duke of the Britons in York.

Edwin's defeat and death. A.D. 633.

6. But Penda became a mighty king, and he joined to his kingdom the Saxons who dwelt on the Severn. But while he was fighting in the South, Oswald, the new king of Northumberland, fought against Cadwalla and slew him (635), and cleared the North lands of his foes. He was a Christian, but he had not learnt the Christian faith from the Roman priests, but from the Irish missionaries in Iona, whither he had been driven in Edwin's time because he was the son of Ethelfrith. When he came to the kingdom he brought in Irish priests to teach his people anew the faith they had forsaken. The chief of these priests was Aidan; and Oswald went about with him and put his words into English for the people, and they soon became Christians again. And from Northumberland there went forth preachers to the rest of England and taught the Gospel to many. In Mercia they did much good. In East England an Irish monk named Fursey preached, for there, too, the people had gone back to their old gods. Even in Kent, at Ethelbert's death, his son became a heathen; but before he died he turned Christian again, and tried to get all his people to believe.

Penda and Oswald. A.D. 633–642.

After seven years Penda came north again, and Oswald fell in battle against him (642). Then Penda wrought great ill, and ravaged the land and slew the people.

7. At last Oswy took the kingdom and gathered his folk to him and went to meet Penda. Before the battle he offered him much gold to make peace, for he was sore in dread of him. But Penda mocked him. Then Oswy vowed to make his daughter a nun, and to give twelve estates to the Church if he won the day. And when the fight began the Marchmen fled before the Northumbrians, and Penda fell as he fled over the river which ran by the place of battle. So the last great heathen king died, and Oswy sent lords to govern his land. But after a little the Marchmen drove them out, setting up Wolfhere, a Christian son of Penda, as king.

Oswy. A.D. 642–670.

8. Moreover, in Oswy's reign, the Christians all over England were set at one amongst themselves. This happened in this way. A priest named Birinus, who was sent to England by the Pope, had converted Cwichelm, the king who had sought to have Edwin slain, and he set up a bishopric at Dorchester. So Wessex also believed. And when Penda died S. Chad was sent by Aidan in 655 to Mercia, and he turned the Mercians to the Christian faith, and his church was at Lichfield. Only the South Saxons were still heathen. But some of the English had been converted by the Irish, as Mercia, Essex, and Northumberland, and the others by the Roman priests. Now the Irish, like the Welsh priests, differed in many customs from the Roman priests. But though Oswy held to the Irish customs, he had wed the daughter of Edwin, who had been brought up in Kent under the Roman customs. So Oswy called a great meeting of all the bishops and chief priests to settle which customs should be followed throughout England. Among others there came Wilfrith, a Northern man by birth, and he persuaded the king to take the Roman customs, and

Synod of Whitby. A.D. 644.

all the people agreed. But Colman, the bishop of Holy Island, when the meeting had given their votes against his wishes, went away with many of his brethren and left Northumberland. So the king asked the Roman priests to send him, in their stead, teachers to order the churches in his kingdom. But the new bishop the king had made soon died, and Oswy sent another priest to Rome to be made bishop, and there he died. So the Pope sent him a priest of Tarsus, named Theodore, who went to England in 668, and with the help of Wilfrith set the Church in order. He set bishops in each kingdom, who were under the chief bishops (archbishops) of York and Canterbury. He also set priests in each district, as far as he could, to dwell among the people. Theodore worked so hard and so well that when he died he left the Church in England ordered in the sort of way that it ever afterwards kept to.

9. Though many of the Irish priests and their disciples had departed, some still remained. Of these the chief was the Englishman Cuthbert, who had been a missionary in Bernicia. After the Synod of Whitby, he went to the islands on the coast and continued there steadfast in good works, so that he was justly counted a saint. S. Cuthbert, S. Hild, and Cædmon.

At the place we now call Whitby, Hild, a lady of royal blood, built a convent, and it became a holy place, and the kings of the North were buried there. To Hild it was that Oswy had sent his daughter when he fulfilled his vow. Near Whitby lived Cædmon the poet, of whom this story is told. He was but a tenant of the convent, and knew not how to sing or play the harp or make verses, as men were used to do at feasts. And when it was his turn to sing at a feast he would leave the room, because he was ashamed of his little knowledge. Once when he had thus gone sorrowful to the cattle-shed where he slept, he had a dream. When he woke he went to Hild, the abbess, and told her that he

had been bidden in a vision to sing of holy things, and that he had been given the power of song. Then Hild told him a Gospel story, and he put it into verse and sung it, and all were astonished at the beautiful songs that he sung. And he became a great poet. He put the stories out of the Bible into verse, so that the men who could not read might remember them; and we have some of his verses still.

10. Wolfhere, the son of Penda, ruled very well and wisely, and he joined Essex and Middlesex and all the land as far as the Thames to his kingdom. The South Saxon king too obeyed his will, and was often at his court; and he gave him the island of Wight to rule under him. In his reign many abbeys and houses of monks were founded; and he built Peterborough, one of the most famous abbeys in England. Crowland Abbey, too, was built about this time. The West Saxons at this time had a brave king also, under whom they fought many battles against the Welsh in the West, and won nearly all the land by the Mendip Hills and on the Parret.

Wolfhere. A.D. 657–675.

11. When Oswy died Egfrith took the kingdom. Soon after Wilfrith was banished. Then he went to Sussex and taught the people, for though their king was Christian, they were still heathen. They listened gladly to him, for he was very wise as well as good, and taught them many useful things; amongst others, how to fish in the deep sea after the Northern fashion, for before they only used to fish in the rivers. And men called Wilfrith the Apostle of Sussex.

Egfrith. A.D. 670–685.

Egfrith and Wolfhere were not very good friends, for Wolfhere wished to become free from the overlordship of Northumberland. They warred against each other, and Egfrith put Wolfhere's host to flight, and made him sue for peace and give up Lincoln and the land round it.

When he had made peace with the Marchmen he warred against the Welsh in Cumberland, and took Car-

lisle, and over it he set S. Cuthbert, whom he called from his cell in Northumberland. Moreover, he made himself overlord of the Vale of the Clyde ; and sent ships also to ravage Ireland, where they got great spoil. At last he went against the Picts, beyond the North Wall, and there he fell, with all his host, in a great battle near Fife (685). And S. Cuthbert fell ill when he heard the news, and went back to his cell, where he died two years after.

When Egfrith was dead the power passed from Northumberland, and Wessex and Mercia became great in its stead.

12. There are several things to notice in this part of English History :—

Northumberland and the Church.

(1.) It is hard to see why, when the greater part of England had been converted by the Irish, all the English took up the Roman customs in Church matters. But the Roman Church was certainly kept in better order than the Irish was. Moreover, the rest of Western Europe had taken the Roman custom. Kent, too, which was a strong kingdom, and had many dealings with the Franks, favoured the Romans much.

(2.) We see that the English were not made Christians by force, as many heathen nations were, but they were persuaded by the teaching of the Gospel. This made them love the faith more, and keep it more steadfastly afterwards, though they wavered a little at first.

(3.) Though neither Northumberland nor Kent was ever strong enough to bring all England into one, yet it was a help towards this that all the English became of one faith and one rule. The Church also tried to stop cruel war and witchcraft, and draw all men together peacefully.

(4.) When the English became Christians, they did not kill or enslave the Welsh, as they had done before ; but when they conquered them they suffered them to remain among them, and made laws to protect them. So, though in the rest of England the Welsh names of places are nearly

all lost, those parts of England which the English won after their conversion are still called by Welsh names.

(5.) When the English became Christians, they learnt from the Irish and Roman missionaries many useful arts which they had not known before. They also mixed more in trade with the other Christian nations, who had hitherto disliked the fellowship of heathen men.

BOOK IV.

WESSEX AND THE MARCHLAND.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. 685–728.

THE RISE OF WESSEX.

1. AFTER the death of Egfrith the strongest of the three great kingdoms was Wessex, which was under Ceadwalla. His forerunners had beaten back the West Welsh, till their realm reached the borders of Devon. But they had made friends with the Welsh of Cambria and learnt somewhat from them. Under them Wessex had become so strong that it was able, in the end, to gain the overlordship of all England.

The rise of Wessex.

2. Ceadwalla reigned but a short while; then he repented him of his sins, laid down his crown and went to Rome. There he was baptized by the Pope, and there soon afterwards he died. He had been a Christian, and so had his brother who reigned with him, but he had not been baptized before, nor did he seem to understand the life of a true Christian. For when he found that the Jutes in the Isle of Wight were still most of them heathen, he fought against them to make them Christians. And he prevailed against them, and took their king and slew him, with all his kin and most of his people. When Wilfrith heard of it he begged him to spare some of them, and he did so, and Wilfrith

Ceadwalla. A.D. 685-688.

by kindness converted them. But Ceadwalla would not spare the lives of the Jute king's two children, for he feared that when they were grown up they would avenge their father's death upon him; so when they were baptized he slew them also. Perhaps it was for this evil deed that he was sorry, and so left his kingdom. This was the only time that an English king ever tried to turn people to the Gospel by the sword; though in other lands there were kings who did so, not knowing that they were doing an evil work.

3. But Ini, who reigned after him, was a good man, wise and mild of heart, and a mighty king. He was obliged to wage many wars. Especially he fought with the Cornish men, who had then a brave king at their head, who tried to drive the English back. But Ini prevailed against him. Ini. A.D. 688–728.

Ini took great care to rule well the lands that he won. When he saw that the bishop of Winchester had too great a charge, he set up a bishop in Sherborne to help him. And he built a house for holy men at Glastonbury, where there was a ruined British church, and this house became very famous in after days.

Ini fought too with the men of Kent, and got from them a fine for slaying Ceadwalla's brother, whom they had burnt in his house. And he made the men of Essex and the East English bow to his rule. But the king of the Marchmen fought against him, so that he was not able to become overlord of that land also.

And Ini made good laws with the help of the wise men of his kingdom, so that his people might dwell in peace; and in all that he did his wife Ethelburg helped him. She was a wise and brave woman; and once when the Cornish men had taken Taunton, which Ini had built, she went down with a host against them and took back the town. When they had both reigned long and gloriously she won over her husband to lay down

his crown, as Ceadwalla had done, and go to Rome, to live there in peace, praying and doing good works till they both died. There is a story told of the way she did this. In those days the kings' palaces were not all garnished with furniture, but when the kings went from one of their great houses to another they took all their household goods with them, and left the house empty behind them. For they used to travel all over their realm, and stay awhile at each of their houses to do justice to the folk of each part of their kingdom and hear all complaints. One day when King Ini had left one of his houses, and his servants had packed up all the household goods, the queen prayed him after a while to ride back to the hall with her, and he did so. When they came there, the house was bare, and cattle and pigs had been driven into the empty hall. And the king was astonished at the changes since the day before, when the hall was fairly decked out, and he and all his valiant men had sat there at meat in high state. Then the queen said to him, 'After this manner the glory and pleasant things of this world pass away; so that I hold him foolish who cleaves to the things of this world and takes no thought of the life everlasting. And we, who fare gloriously in this world, should not forget the world that is to come.' And the king was won by her words to do as she wished.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH.

1. In the days of Ini there went forth from England many good men to preach the gospel to the heathen Germans and Frisians. For just as the Irish, when they had heard the Gospel, wished that all men would hearken to it, and sent many missionaries to the heathen in Germany and the land we now call Switzerland, so the English did in their turn. And

Missionaries.

they were the more moved to do this because the Germans were near of kin to themselves. Wilfrith, when he was cast on the coast of the North Sea, had preached the Gospel to the Frisians and the Saxons who had stayed behind when their brethren went to England. Chief amongst the English missionaries were Willebrord and Winfrith (who in the Latin tongue is called Boniface). When Boniface had converted the Germans in their own land, set bishops over them, and put priests among them in their villages, as Theodore had done in England, he was made their first archbishop, and lived at Mainz, on the Rhine, in their midst, and did much good. But after nearly forty years' work, when he heard that many of the Frisians were still heathen, he set out to visit them and preach to them also, and soon after he died (757). And men numbered him among the saints, and called him the Apostle of the Germans.

2. In England also there were many great Churchmen in those days, and chiefly in Northumberland, where at this time there was peace for a short while. One called Benedict taught the English how to build fair churches of stone, for the English before used to build chiefly with wood, and were not skilled in stonework. He also brought over glass for the church windows, which the English did not know of before, but used horn and parchment instead. And he built houses for monks to dwell in to do good works; and in one of these, at Jarrow, lived Bede, the first great English scholar. He was learned in all the wisdom of the time, and taught many disciples and wrote many books of those things which he wished them to know, some in English, and some in Latin; he wrote songs and hymns also. And it is from one of his books, 'A History of the English Church,' that we learn much about the Early English. He put the Gospel of S. John into English that all men might read it; this was his last work. When he died

The Churchmen of the North.

(735), all the wise men in England mourned for him. He had many friends who helped him in his work, and the king of Northumberland was among them. And the good King Alfred, many years after, put some of his Latin books into English, so useful did he think them for all men to know. Of other English Churchmen, Wilfrith was perhaps the greatest. He had made the first library in England at York. He was also much beloved, though he was quick of temper, for he did many good deeds and was never idle, but always would be doing what he could to help the people and preach the Gospel. He was a great traveller, and had seen many lands, and everywhere he went men honoured him for his goodness. He died 709.

Irish Churchmen.

3. In Ireland too at this time were many good and wise men, and it was from the Irish that the Northumberland men had got much of their learning. For this reason Ireland was called the 'Isle of Saints.'

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 728–802.

WESSEX AND THE MARCHLAND.

Ethelbald of the Marchland.

1. AFTER Ini, there reigned other kings over the West Saxons, of whom it is not needful to speak here. They were not very powerful, and in their days Ethelbald, king of the Marchmen, was the mightiest man in England.

But of one of these kings, whose name was Sebert, it is to be noted that he reigned ill and so lost his kingdom. For his folk, who had chosen him to be king, took his crown from him and gave it to Cynwulf.

Cynwulf. A.D. 757–786.

2. Cynwulf was a brave king and ruled well. He overcame Ethelbald in battle and slew him. But Offa, who reigned next in the Marchland, forced Cynwulf to bow to him and do his will. Cynwulf was slain after a long reign, and his death happened

in this way. One day he went to stay at the house of a lady at Merton and took few men with him. And when Cynhard, brother of Selsey, who wished to be king himself, heard of it, he gathered together a band of those men that hated Cynwulf and loved him, and suddenly beset the house where Cynwulf was. When Cynwulf was aware of them, he went out to the door and kept it bravely with his sword, and he wounded Cynhard; but he was borne down by Cynhard's men, for he was alone, and slain. And when his men heard the cries of the lady, they ran up and found their king dead, and Cynhard standing by. He offered them gold rings and lands and goods if they would follow him and help him to be king, and death if they would not. They chose death, for they would never help their master's slayer. So Cynhard and his men fell upon them, and they fought till they were all slain save one, a Welshman, a hostage, and he was badly wounded. Then Cynhard locked the gates and kept the hall for that night. But news was brought to Osric, Cynwulf's alderman, that Cynhard had slain the king, and was at Merton, and some of his own kinsfolk with him. So he gathered all the men he could and rode to Merton in haste, and there he found the gates shut. Cynhard offered him and those with him to be their king, but they would not, though Osric's kinsmen, who were with Cynhard, prayed him to listen to him. And Osric offered his kinsmen peace if they would leave Cynhard; but they said they would stand by Cynhard to the death, as Cynwulf's men had done by him. Then Osric and his folk broke down the gates and fell upon Cynhard and his folk, and they fell there fighting to the last, and only one was saved, Osric's godson.

And Beorric was chosen king by the Wise Men of the kingdom, and he reigned seventeen years (786–802).

3. When Ethelbald fell, Bernred took the March kingdom. He reigned but a short while, for Offa, who

was of the royal blood, and alderman in the Severn valley, drove him out and took the crown. He had the most power of any man that had yet been in England, for all the other kings bowed to his rule; and now England was as one for the first time. Offa led his host against the Welsh and took one of their chief towns. He called it Shrewsbury, and made it strong against them. And he drew a great dyke across Wales, from the Dee to the Wye, that it might be a bulwark and a boundary after the fashion of the two Roman walls. He married one of his daughters, Edburg, to Bertric, and another to the king of Northumberland, that they might be the more easily ready to do his will. Now, Edburg, who married Bertric, was an evil woman, and she hated those whom her husband loved, for she wished him to listen only to her. She put poison in a cup for a friend of the king to drink, and by chance Bertric drank of it also, and they both died. When this was known the West Saxons drove out Edburg, and made a law that no other king's wife should have power or be called queen. As for Edburg, she went to the court of Charles the Great, and he gave her an abbey to rule, but she ruled it as ill as she had ruled the West Saxons, so he took it from her. And she went to Italy and wandered about in great need there, begging her bread till she died.

Offa of the Marchland. A.D. 757–796.

At this time Charles the Great was the king of the Franks, and was the mightiest man in West Europe. He and Offa were friends at first, but afterwards they fell out because Charles was jealous of Offa's power and would always help Offa's foes, for he wished to be overlord in England himself. Egbert also, who fled from Bertric—for he was of the royal blood and was afraid of that king's hate—was received at Charles's court and well treated there.

And when Offa and the men of Kent quarrelled, Charles stirred up the archbishop of Canterbury against Offa, and promised to help him with soldiers. But Offa put down

the men of Kent and set up an archbishop at Lichfield to rule over the Marchmen's Church, as the archbishop of Canterbury ruled over the Church in Wessex, and the archbishop of York in Northumberland. But the archbishop of Canterbury was sorely grieved at this.

But Charles and Offa were made friends once or twice by Alwin or Alcwin, a scholar of Northumberland, whom Offa had sent to Charles to teach him the learning of the English.

In Offa's days there lived in North England a poet named Cynwolf, some of whose songs we have now. We have, too, other poems written about this time by men whose names are lost. So it would seem that in Offa's days men found peace and leisure for writing and making poetry, which they had not again till long after his death.

Offa ruled his land very well, and cared much for the good of his people, and made laws for them by the help of his wise men, as Ini had done. He was good to men of learning and Churchmen, and built a great abbey at Verulam, where S. Alban was slain in the Roman time, and the town is called S. Albans to this day. But one abbey he built because of an evil thing he did. He slew Ethelbert, king of the East English, by craft, for he asked him to come and see him and marry his daughter, and when he came he had him murdered; but men say that the queen persuaded him to do this evil. And Ethelbert was held a saint and martyr for his cruel death. But Offa repented sorely afterwards, and sent gifts to the Pope. Soon after this he died, and his son Cenwolf ruled after him. He made friends with the archbishop of Canterbury, and when the archbishop of Lichfield died he never set up another. He fought with the Welsh, and went far into Wales, both North and South, after his enemies. He also fought with the men of Kent. But after his days Egbert became king of Wessex, and brought the Marchland into his own kingdom; and those kings who reigned there after Cenwolf he drove away.

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BOOK IV.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DANES.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. 802–838.

EGBERT.

1. EGBERT came to the West Saxon throne in 802, and reigned many years. He put all the kings in England under him, as Offa had done; but he was so powerful, and things fell out so well for him, that the kings never got free again at his death, as they had done when Offa died. So he gained at last for Wessex the overlordship of England, which the Northern kings had tried to win for Northumberland, and the kings of the Marchmen for Marchland. So under Egbert England became one in rule, as it had at Whitby become one in faith. Moreover, the West Saxon kings now brought the kings of the Welsh and Scots under them, and so became overlords of all Britain. There were still Scotch and Welsh kings; but they obeyed the English kings and acknowledged their rule. So with the reign of Egbert finishes this part of English History, in which has been told the story of the kingdoms which the English founded. The history which follows is the history of England under one king, and its struggles against foes who came from without.

Egbert's work.

2. For in Egbert's reign the Danes began to show themselves bitter foes to the English, as will afterwards be seen. Eight years after Bertric married Offa's daughter Edburg three Northern ships came to the English coast, and when the alderman of the place where they landed came down to

The Danes and Norwegians.

see who they were they slew him. This is the first time we hear of the DANES and NORTHMEN plundering in England. They lived on the eastern coasts of the North Sea, in the same way as the English had done before they came to England. They were of the same kin and spoke the same tongue, though little by little it has grown different, till now an Englishman has to learn Danish as he would German. The reason why the Danes, as the English called them (for the Norwegians plundered chiefly Scotland and Ireland and the Western islands), began to come about this time, is perhaps partly because of the wars which Charles the Great and his house waged against the heathen Saxons and Danes. Moreover, in Denmark and Norway, just as in England, there were many small kingdoms, and many wars, and men fought cruelly with each other. There were also bad seasons about this time and scant food for the people.

So many of the kings and nobles took to the sea, and sailed about in their warships plundering the coasts of North and West Europe from Finland to Spain.

And when they saw that the Western lands were rich and fruitful and pleasant to dwell in, they made up their minds to win themselves new homes there. So they came to settle on the west and north coasts of Great Britain, Ireland, and France, and set up kingdoms and earldoms there. But though they could not prevent them from settling in their realms, the English, Irish, and Frankish kings forced them to live peacefully and become Christians. And those of them who were not content to live under kings, went off further west and north and settled in the Faroes and Iceland and Greenland.

3. Egbert had been long at the court of Charles the Great while Bertric was king of the West Saxons. And no doubt what he had learnt there helped him when he became king in England. For Charles

Egbert and Charles.

was a great warrior and statesman, and conquered many peoples, and built up a mighty empire, and of him, his valiant men, and the deeds they did, many stories are told. And just before Egbert, by Charles's help, became king of the West Saxons, Charles was crowned by the Pope Emperor after the old Roman fashion, for he was now ruler over great part of the old Roman Empire. Henceforth there were two Emperors, one in the West, the Frank Emperor, who lived a great deal at Aken (Aachen); and the other ruling the Eastern part of the old Roman Empire from Constantinople.

4. Egbert had a very busy reign. First he fought with the Welsh of Cornwall, the old foemen of the West Saxons, in 815; then against the king of the Marchmen at Ellandune (825). This was a hard-fought battle, and many men fell there, so it is said in the old rhyme:

Egbert's wars.

Ellandune flood ran red with blood.

After this battle the Marchmen were obliged to bow to Egbert's rule; and though they long withstood him they never could free themselves. Perhaps this was because the Frank kings hated the Marchmen and would not help them, but also it was through the hatred of the East English, for when they found the March kingdom growing weak they rose against it, and sent to Egbert and took him as their overlord. When the March king came against them they slew him. And afterwards, when the next king with a great host and five aldermen sought to avenge him, they slew him and his aldermen with him. So they became free from their old overlords; but they were obliged to take Egbert as overlord in their stead. Egbert also sent his son to Kent with an army, and he drove out the Kentish under-king, and was made king by

his father in his stead, and over Sussex and Essex also. That same year too, the English won a victory over the Welsh and Danes at Gafulford.

Two years after (827) Egbert gathered a great host, and went north, and the Marchmen solemnly took him as their lord, and the men of Northumberland wher they saw his might did likewise. The next year he went against the Welsh of Wales, that he might give peace to the Marchmen, whom they were always attacking ; so that it was seen that Egbert not only dared to rule but also to be of use to his subjects.

At the end of his reign Egbert was harassed by the Danes and Northmen. This was the Danish way : they would sail up some river and there build an earthwork fort on some island or safe place for their camp, and from it they would row farther up the river in their ships, or seize horses and ride over the land, and plunder it, driving off all the cattle, and taking all the gold and silver. They slew the priests and robbed the churches wherever they could, for they were full of precious things. Perhaps too they remembered how Charles the Great and his kin had warred on their heathen brethren and slain them cruelly because they would not be Christians.

5. After this they ravaged the South country two or three years, sailing up and down the Channel, using the islands upon the French coast as their winter-quarters. Moreover, the Welsh joined with the Danes against Egbert, but he gathered a host and went against them, and had the victory over them at Hengist's Down, now called Houston Hill, near the Tamar, in Cornwall (837). Soon after this he died (838), full of honour, and when he died he parted his kingdom, as the kingdom of Charles was parted afterwards, among his sons. Ethelwolf took Wessex and became overlord of Britain, and Ethelstan took the land

Hengist's Down (Houston Hill.)

which Ethelwolf had ruled before, Kent and Sussex and Essex, as under-king.

Egbert is called in the old books by the title of *Brytenwalda*, that is, Ruler of Britain, as Edwin had been. This title is only given to seven kings before Egbert.

6. In Egbert's days lived a Norwegian king named Ragnar Rough Breeks, because he once clothed himself in skins to fight a wild beast. Of him it is said that he was shipwrecked in England, and that Ella the king of Northumberland took him and cast him alive into a pit full of snakes, where, in spite of his sufferings, he sang a wonderful song telling of all his great deeds, till the snakes stung him to death. It was to revenge his death, some say, that his sons afterwards came to England and waged a cruel war against the English.

Ragnar Rough Breeks.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 839–871.

ETHELWOLF AND HIS ELDER SONS.

1. ETHELWOLF reigned many years, and nearly all his time, like his father's, was taken up by war. First, he had to fight the Danes. All along the south and west coasts of England great fleets of them were plundering the land. They were beaten at Southampton, but they drove the March king away, and overcame the English in battles in Dorset and Kent. In 851 Ethelwolf and his son Ethelbald fought the greatest battle within the memory of man, at Oaklea, in Surrey. There the Danes fled before them, and they cleared the land of them for a while. But not long after, a band of them wintered in Sheppey, just as the English had in Thanet before they began to conquer Britain. In 855, Ethelwolf, seeing that his kingdom was at rest for a little—for he had won a

Ethelwolf. A.D 839-858.

battle against the Welsh also—went to Rome as a pilgrim. Two years before he had sent thither his little son Alfred, and the Pope had received him very kindly, and made him his godson and hallowed him as a king. After he had stayed a year at Rome, Ethelwolf brought him back with him to England. He gave the Pope gifts, and promised to set aside a tenth of his land for the Church and the poor. On his way back Ethelwolf married Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, king of the West Franks, and grandson of Charles the Great. This Charles afterwards became Emperor, like his grandfather; but now he was ruling over only a part of the realm of Charles, which had been divided between him and his brothers by their father, Louis. It is said that when Ethelwolf was coming home his son Ethelbald and bishop Alstan made a plot against him, and he was obliged to give Ethelbald Wessex; taking Kent, Sussex, and Essex for himself, for his brother Ethelstan was now dead. So his queen Judith reigned over Kent with him, but over Wessex since Edburg's days there was no queen. Soon after Ethelwolf died; and before his death, with the goodwill of his wise men, he divided his realm among his sons. To Ethelbert he gave Kent, and to the others Wessex, and the head-kingship to Ethelbald, Ethelred, and Alfred, one after another; but Ethelbert was never to be head-king.

2. So Ethelbald was made king, and he ruled for two years only. He married Judith, his stepmother, after the custom of the heathen kings, who used to marry the widow of the king who reigned before them. When he died all the people mourned greatly for him, so that though we know little of him we may believe he ruled his people well. But Judith after her husband's death, went to Gaul and married the Count of Flanders, and from her are sprung many famous folk.

Ethelbald. A.D. 858-860.

3. Ethelbert, king of Kent, now became head-king, though his father had bid him be content with his own realm. In his days the Danes began to plunder again. Once they broke into Winchester, the royal city of the West Saxons; but the aldermen came upon them and put them to flight. They also ravaged Kent sorely. Ethelbert reigned but a short while, and then he died, and Ethelred was made king.

Ethelbert. A.D. 860-866.

4. Soon after he began to reign the sons of Ragnar Rough Breeks came with ships and men, plundered the East and North, and set up a king over part of Northumberland who ruled under them; but at York one of Ragnar's sons reigned. The sons of Ragnar also made raids in Ireland and Scotland, and set up a kingdom at Dublin, on the coast of Ireland. Soon after the taking of York the Danes went south into the Marchland, where they took all the towns north of Watling Street. People, when they came, now began to try and make peace with them, for they could not withstand them. But though the Danes would make peace for a while they soon began to plunder again.

Ethelred. A.D. 866-871.

In 869 Alfred the Etheling (which is the West Saxon name for king's son) married a daughter of an alderman, who was of the blood-royal. On the day of his wedding he was smitten with a disease which harassed him all his life after, so that it is wonderful that he was able to do so much in spite of his illness.

In 870 the Danes took horse and rode into East England, where they took the under-king Edmund prisoner, and because he would not become under-king to them nor forsake his faith they slew him with arrows. His body was entombed in a town near, which has been since called by his name, Bury S. Edmunds. For he was counted a saint. And the Danes took East England and settled in it, and it became a Danish king-

dom. Yet they did not drive out the English, but the East English became, as it were, Danes.

5. The Danes next came into the middle of England, where Ethelred and Alfred, his brother, fought oft-times with them. Of one of these battles there is a story told. Two Danish kings and five earls with a great host were plundering Middle England. Against them came Ethelred and Alfred; and the Danes set their battle in array by a hawthorn that was on Ashdown, in Berkshire; but the English were below. Ethelred's men were set against the two kings, and Alfred and his men against the earls. Before the battle Ethelred went to prayers, and when the battle began he was still praying. They called him out to the fight, but he would not go till his prayers were done, for he said he must first serve God and then his fellow-men. When his prayers were finished he went to help Alfred, who was fighting like a wild boar against the hunters. And he brought him great help, and slew one of the Danish kings with his own hand. And at last the Danes fled before the English, who chased them many miles. There fell also the five Danish earls.

Ashdown battle.

But the Danes were so many and strong that they fought two battles soon after against the king, in one of which he is said to have got his death-wound; and Alfred, his brother, was made king in his stead.

CHAPTER III.

ALFRED THE TRUTH-TELLER.

1. ALFRED'S reign falls into two parts, the first down to 880, in which he was fighting chiefly with the Danes, who were settling in the North and East of England under Ragnar's sons and Guthrum; the last part (881 to 901), when he was chiefly fighting with Hasting and those who were trying to

Alfred the Truth-teller. A.D. 871–901.

win lands in the South, though the settled Danes helped them sometimes.

Soon after he became king, he had to fight the Danes and there was a drawn battle; but the Danes found that it was hard work fighting with Alfred, so many of them went away and plundered other lands, where the people did not withstand them so well. Then Alfred fought the Danes at sea and took a ship of theirs, which was a great thing to do, for the Danes had splendid ships, and men dreaded them even more on sea than on land.

2. Next year (876) Halfdan, Ragnar's son, settled with his Norwegians round York. He shared the land among them and they ruled it as their own. And the other Danes, under Guthorm, or Guthrum, Danish king of East England, came back to plunder Wessex. But Alfred made peace with them, and they swore oaths to him on the holy ring, heathen fashion. Next year many of them broke this oath. But one of their fleets was wrecked, so they did not attack Wessex again, but ravaged the Marchland, that still held out for king Alfred, south of Watling Street.

Halfdan and the Danes settle in York. A.D. 876.

But in 878 they came in such strong bands into Wessex that Alfred had to fly from them into Somerset, where he lived in a little island, called Athelney (Princes' Island), among the marshes which then covered that land. There he kept himself concealed till he could get together a force to drive the Danes out of England again. Near here was found, not long ago, a jewel which had belonged to a staff or sceptre, and on it the words, 'Alfred bade me be wrought.' About this time, when he was here hiding, a famous story is told. He took refuge with a poor man one day and stayed with him in his cottage, but the poor man's wife did not know he was the king. She told the king to watch, while she was out of the room, some cakes which she put on the fire; but the

king forgot the cakes, for he was thinking and mending his bow and arrows. When the good-wife came back the cakes were spoilt. Then she was very angry, and told the king that he was ready to eat them when they were done but was too lazy to help to do them properly. For she knew not that he had been thinking of greater things.

3. Soon things began to look brighter, and Alfred was able to come forth as a king again. First one of Ragnar's sons was slain in Devon, and his magic banner, that had been worked in one day by his sisters, was taken. It was the image of a raven embroidered and fixed on a pole; its wings waved in the wind, and wherever it went it was said to bring victory to those who carried it. Soon after this victory Alfred gathered a great host at a place he fixed, and then he went after the Danes, and they fought at Edington, in the West Saxon land, and Alfred won the day; and there is still to be seen the figure of a horse cut in the turf, on the side of the hill, which is said to be a mark of this great battle. And after this battle he followed the Danes and shut them up in a fortress which they had made, till they promised to make peace and take the Christian faith. For Alfred could not trust their oaths as long as they were heathen. So the Danes and their king were baptized, and Alfred was godfather to Guthrum, giving him a new name, Ethelstan, which had been the name of his own father's brother. Peace also was made between the two kings at Chippenham. King Guthrum was to keep East Anglia and the north half of the Marchland above Watling Street, and be Alfred's man; and Alfred was to keep all the rest. And that part of the Marchland which Alfred had he gave to Ethelred, an alderman of his, for there were no longer kings there; and he gave Ethelfled, his eldest daughter, to him to wife.

Edington and Chippenham. A.D. 878

Next year very few of the Danes stayed south of Watling Street. Most of the Christians went to Guthrum-Ethelstan's realm. Those who were still heathen went to join Hasting, a famous sea-rover, who was now in Gaul.

So there was peace in England; but the Danes from abroad would still plunder the coast now and then, and Alfred fought once against them at sea.

Now the Danes ruled Yorkshire, East Anglia, and part of the Marchland. The rest of Northumberland and all south of Watling Street was under Alfred and his aldermen. But the Danes who lived in England had become Christians. That was a great gain to the English, for they no longer plundered cruelly, but began to settle down quietly with the English.

4. In 885 the kings of Wales are said to have made peace with Alfred and to have become his under-kings, and this is not unlikely. About this time Charles the Bald became Emperor, but he reigned weakly and his kingdom was divided and never brought together again, and in the north of Gaul the Counts of Paris ruled, who after a hundred years became kings of France. They deserved it, for they saved Gaul from the Northmen.

Alfred over-lord of the Welsh. A.D. 885.

5. There was at this time in Norway a great king named Harold Fair-hair, who had smitten the small kings and made one great kingdom, and he had a friend, earl Ronwald, who had helped him much in this work. This king got his name in this way. He fell in love with a lady who was so proud that she would not marry a small king, as he was then, but laughed at him and said she would wed him when he was king of all Norway. He took this in earnest and swore he would never cut or comb his hair till he was head king of Norway; and after many years' hard work he became so. Then he combed out his hair and

Harold Fair-hair and Rolf Ganger.

trimmed it, and it was so long that he could tuck it under his belt, and it was as fair as gold. Then he married the proud lady, and she became queen, according to her words. Now, one of Ronwald's sons was so wild that the king thrust him out of the land. His name was Rolf, and he was called Ganger, or Walker, because he was so big and heavy that he could not easily find a horse to bear him. Rolf took to sea-roving, and joined Hasting, a great rover also, and they plundered the coasts of France and England, and began to be very famous. After Alfred's death Rolf won land in the north of France and settled there, as King Guthrum had done in the east of England. Men called it Northman's Land, or Normandy; and Rolf, like Guthrum, was baptized with all his men in 921. These *Normans* soon began to speak French, for they had not slain all the Frenchmen, but had settled down in their midst and parcelled out the land among them, making the Frenchmen work on the land and pay rent to them. Had it not been for the Counts of Paris no doubt the Normans would have conquered all North France; but Paris always withstood them, and they could go no further. And one of these brave Counts became king of the Franks in 922, and all later French kings sprung from him.

6. Once before 893 the great host of the Danes came over from Holland, where they were plundering, to England, and tried to take Rochester, and ravaged Essex; but Alfred drove them away. In 886 he rebuilt the walls of London. In 890 King Guthrum died; which was an ill thing for Alfred, for while he lived he had tried to keep the peace. In 891 was fought in the Netherlands the great battle of Loewen or Louvain, between the Danes and the East Frank king, who discomfited them and smote them with a great slaughter, so that they dared not ravage in the Franks' land for many years. This made them go

Alfred and Hasting.

back to England and try and settle there. So in 893 they came back under Hasting, the sea-rover, built forts of earthwork in Kent, and tried to hold the land. The Danes of Northumberland and East England helped them, and Alfred was hard beset, but he faced them boldly. Next year, while he was fighting against one band in the West, another band came from the East of England up the Thames and rode across the land. Alfred pursued them and won a battle, and they went back to East England. There they left their spoil, and wives and children—for they came, like the English, with all their goods, wishing to make a new home—and then rode across England to Chester, whence they could not easily be driven. But in 896 the Sussex folk put to flight one band that came up out of the west. The next year the Danes brought their ships up the Lea, and made a fort and sat down there; but the English made a great cutting and turned the water another way, so the Danish ships were left dry. This was by Alfred's counsel, for he had come there to protect the corn against the Danes, for it was harvest-time. When the Danes saw that they could not go back by the river they took horse and rode across to the Severn Valley, and there made another fort and waited for ships. But the men of London went up to fetch the ships the Danes had left, and those that were seaworthy they kept, but the rest they broke up. Soon after the Danish host left Alfred's kingdom; some went off to their brethren on the East coast, and some went over sea to the Seine, where Rolf was setting up his earldom.

Alfred's fleet. A.D. 897

7. But Alfred found that the best way to keep off the Danes was by having good ships to fight them at sea, and follow them round the coast. So he built long ships against the ships of the Danes, fullnigh twice as long as they, and swifter,

steadier, and higher. He seems to have been his own shipbuilder, for we are told that he did not copy the Danish nor Frisian ships, but made them as he thought best for the work of keeping the coasts. Through the unskilfulness of their crews they were not able to beat the Danes who came and plundered the Isle of Wight and Devon. Yet, though the Danes escaped once from them, they were not willing to risk themselves as they did before Alfred had a good fleet; and soon he was better able by this means to keep the coast.

In 901 he died, and his son Edward was made king.

8. Besides these wars of Alfred and the great troubles of his reign he found time for many things, so that he got as great a name as ever English king before or after got. He was called the Truth-teller, and the Great. He was a very just king, and took great trouble to make good laws, which he chose out of the laws of Ethelbert and Ini and Offa. Some of his own laws also he set with them by the counsel of the great men of England. He made strict laws against robbery, violence, and evil-doing, and against those who broke the commandments of the Church and the Bible.

Alfred's character.

He was a very learned man for his day, and protected scholars, so that his fame spread abroad. In 891 there came to see him four of the chief scholars of Ireland, then a great place for learning. Alfred kept learned men about him, such as Grimbald the Frank, and Asser the Welshman, who helped him to learn and who wrote his life. When Alfred found that the Danish war had driven learning out of the North and destroyed the schools that had been there from the days of Bede, he set about finding teachers for his people. He did what he could to teach them himself, for he set many books out of Latin into English for them, that they might learn wisdom; and he added to

these books what he thought useful out of his own knowledge. He had Bede's Church History put into English, and the Pastoral of Pope Gregory, and he himself Englished the Wisdom of Boethius, and a book by Orosius, who wrote of the world and its geography. In his reign too the English Chronicles were put into shape and a full history of his Danish wars written therein.

Alfred was careful of the Church. He would often send messengers and gifts to the Pope, and there went messengers from him to the churches in India and Jerusalem. He built two monasteries, and over one he put his second daughter as abbess. The other he built at Athelney, out of thankfulness for the great deliverance he had after the evil days he passed there in hiding.

He was fond of hearing about foreign lands, and in his translation of Orosius he tells us of the travels of two sea-captains, Othhere the Norwegian and Wulfstan, who knew the North Sea, the White Sea, and the Baltic. He loved hunting and music and handiwork.

He was hard-working, and never lost a moment, but always had something to do, and he carried a little handbook with him to put down anything that seemed useful to remember. He chose good officers, and took heed of rich and poor alike. For he said that in a well-ruled kingdom the priest, the soldier, and the yeoman should each be taken care of, that each might do his appointed work as well as possible.

He was very mild of heart and forgiving. Once when Hasting had broken his oath to him and was fighting against him he took his wife and children prisoners; but he sent them back to him and would not keep them in bonds. He was loved for his good heart as well as for his wise head; and when he was dead men often wished that the days of good king Alfred, 'England's darling,' 'Englishmen's comfort,' would come again.

9. Though the Danes were still troublesome after

Alfred's death they were not able to do much harm for a long time; most of the Danes who had been seeking a fresh home had found one, or had gone back, or had been slain, and so there was rest; and under the kings who reigned for the next hundred years England was greater and more peaceful than it had been before. The reasons why the Danes had been able to conquer and settle down in so much of the land were:

The Danes.

(1.) They were able to move about more swiftly in their ships than the English could move along the roads, and so they often took the English unawares.

(2.) The land of England, though it was under one over-lord was not yet quite one kingdom. Each part of the country still acted by itself a good deal, and so the Danes, though not strong enough to beat the great king, could often drive away the under-kings or aldermen.

(3.) The Danes were near akin to the English. So, though the English fought very bravely for their land and their homes, yet they felt that if the Danes would only make peace and dwell among them quietly as neighbours they would be safer than if they had them as foes.

(4.) In the first days of the Danish inroads the English king had no regular fleet nor army, like our armies of to-day always ready to fight any foe. He had only his own guards, and when he wished to go to war he had to send round and summon all the armed men of the kingdom and wait till they came together before they could do anything. They would not stay together very long, but went back to their business whenever they had won a battle or lost one, or had served as long as they thought fit. But the Danes were under better discipline than the English. When men live much on board ship, they learn to act together and to obey their captain, and so it was with the Danes, who often beat the English merely because they kept better order and were steadier in battle.

The KELTIC Peoples:

Scotland (both Picts and Scots, under Scottish kings)
Cumberland (now put under the Scottish kings)
Wales (North and South) under Welsh kings.

The ENGLISH:

E. 1. *Essex* (there were Danes settled in parts of East Essex and Middlesex)

E. 2. *Marchland* (there were also Danes settled in parts of Bucks, Beds, Herts, Hunts)

E. 3. *Wessex.*

E. 4. *Sussex.*

E. 5. *Kent.*

The DANISH Settlements:

D. 1. *Northumberland* (many Northmen here)

D. 2. *The Five Boroughs* (*Nottingham*, *Derby*, *Leicester*, *Stamford*, and *Lincoln*)

D. 3. *East England.*

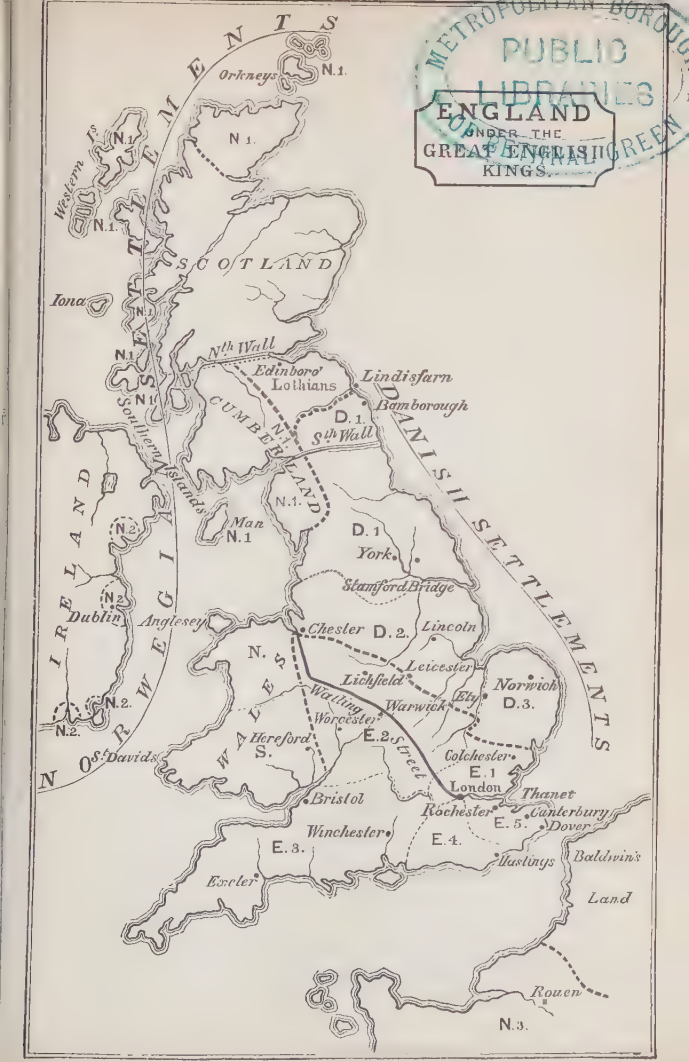
The *Lothians*, where the Danes did not hold rule, was put at last under the Scottish kings.

The NORTHMEN'S Settlements:

N. 1. The *Orkney Earldom* and the *Kingdom of Man*, and the Settlements on the coast of *Cumberland* and by *Chester* and *Manchester*

N. 2. *Northmen's Irish Kingdom*

N. 3. *Normandy*



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BOOK VI.

THE GREAT OLD-ENGLISH KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

EDWARD THE ELDER.—A.D. 901–925.

1. KING EDWARD, called the ELDER, is said to have been in learning less, in honour and worth equal, in glory greater than his father, for he spread his kingdom much farther than Alfred had done. At first he had much trouble; for one of his cousins, Ethelwald, son of Ethelred, wished to be king in his stead. Though Edward drove him out of his kingdom the Northern Danes made him their king. He made an alliance with Yorick, king of the Danes in East England, and ravaged Kent and the Marchland. So Edward went up against him, and many Kentishmen with him, and there was a great battle fought. When Edward was obliged to give way the men of Kent would not draw back, they were so angry at the wasting of their land, but though Edward sent seven times to them to tell them of their danger, they stayed and fought on. They could not win the battle, but Ethelwald and Yorick and many of the chief Danes fell; and so the danger was stayed. Next year Guthrum, the son of Yorick, and Edward made peace, as Alfred and Guthrum the Elder had done. They also set Watling Street as a boundary between their lands, and agreed to put down all witchcraft and heathendom among their people.

Edward and Ethelfled.

Now, Edward and his sister Ethelfled, the Lady of Mercia, set about fortifying all the towns along the border. The Lady built up Chester, which was a waste city, and

many towns she walled throughout her land, and some new ones she built; and Edward did the like in his land.

They fought many battles with the Danes who came from without, for Guthrum kept well to the peace. In 912 Ethelred the alderman died, but Ethelfled governed his land after his death bravely and wisely.

2. In 915 a large Danish fleet came to England, and the Danes tried to land, but they were driven off and went to Ireland. The Danes.

And now there was war again between the English and Danes on the Border; but the Lady was everywhere victorious, and she took all the Danes' land up to York, and brought Middle England into Edward's power. At last just as she was laying siege to York she died. She had fought too with the Welsh, and taken the Welsh queen prisoner. When she was dead Edward joined the Marchland to his kingdom and governed it himself. As before, Edward was victorious over the Danes, and though they tried hard they could never take his new castles and walled towns, for he had at last found the true way to stay them. So one after another they came to make peace—first, some Danes from abroad, then the Danes on the borders of Northumberland. At last, in 922, the Welsh, who had tried in vain to get hold of Chester, took him as father and lord. So did the Dane king of York, and the Welsh of the Clyde Valley, the English lord of the north who ruled in Bamborough, and the king of the Scots. So now Edward ruled over all Britain as overlord, and over a great part as his own kingdom. This happened in 923, and soon after he died. Men called Edward the Unconquered, because of his glory in war.

3. It was in 921 that Charles the Simple, king of the West Franks, gave Normandy to Rolf and made peace with him. At the peace-making between them, when Rolf became Charles's man, and Rolf in Normandy, 921.

swore to hold Normandy of him, he was told to kiss the king's slipper in token that he took him as his lord. But he said he would never do that, and he bade one of his men do it for him. The man, instead of stooping down, lifted up the king's foot so that he fell backward on the ground. At this the Northmen laughed, for they thought it wrong that a man should be so proud.

4. Edward had many children, and some of his daughters became queens also, for they were married to the great kings over-sea—one to Otto the Emperor, another to Charles the Simple, another to Louis, king of Arles, and one to Hugh, great Count of Paris. But one was married to Sigtric, the Dane king in the North. When Charles the Simple, king of the West Franks, was driven from his kingdom, Edgif, his wife, came to England with her little son Lewis, who was afterwards king in his father's land, and he was called Lewis 'from over-sea,' because he was long at the English court.

Edward's children.

This shows that the English kings were now great people, and were thought much of abroad. Also it shows that the kings after Egbert took much care to be friends with the kings abroad. Thus England was no more shut out from the rest of the Western world, as it had been when there were many small kings in England.

Edward, like his father, made good laws and was especially careful that the peace should be kept and that the judges should act uprightly. He also favoured the Church, and one of his daughters became a nun. And he set a new bishop in the west of his land, at Wells. Edward died in 925, and his son Ethelstan was made king, and there was great joy when he was crowned.

CHAPTER II.

ETHELSTAN THE STEADFAST.—A.D. 925-940.

1. ETHELSTAN had some trouble at the beginning of his reign, for a cousin of his tried to get made king instead, but he was driven away. Soon the Dane king Sigtric died, and the Danes' war broke out afresh in the North; but Ethelstan took Northumberland and joined it to his own kingdom, though the English men of Bamborough tried to withstand him. The sons of Sigtric fled to Ireland and Scotland and tried to get help there against him, but Ethelstan made the Scot king keep the peace. And now Ethelstan took Exeter, and made it strong, and set Englishmen in it; so the Welsh had only Cornwall in the West. Ethelstan's wars.

But in 937 there gathered a great host against him, for the Scots and Welsh of Strath Clyde joined the Danes. Ethelstan and his brother Edmund marched north to meet them, and they fought at Brunanburg. Of this battle there is a famous song which tells how Ethelstan slew the Scot king's son, and five Dane sea-kings (kings of fleets), and many great men. All day they fought, but when evening came the English won the fight.

Before the battle it is said that Anlaf Cuaran, one of the Dane kings, disguised himself as a harper and went into Ethelstan's camp to spy out his array. But a soldier who had fought for Anlaf in former days saw him and thought he knew him. So when the Englishmen gave him money for his playing he watched him, and when he saw him bury the money—for Anlaf thought it not kingly to take money from the English when he was acting as a spy—he was sure it was the king. When Anlaf was gone he told Ethelstan who it was. But Ethelstan asked him why he had let him go, and the soldier said, 'If I

had betrayed him whom I once served how shouldst thou have trusted me, whom I serve now?' And Ethelstan was pleased with his answer. But Anlaf gathered his men and fell upon Ethelstan's camp that night, and slew a bishop who lay where Ethelstan had lain. For Ethelstan moved his tent when he knew that Anlaf had spied out his camp. But the Englishmen woke up, and at last drove out the Danes and slew many of them. After this great battle the Scot and Welsh kings made peace with Ethelstan again, for they feared his might.

2. Ethelstan was a very good king, and we never hear of any evil deed of his doing, save that some say he caused his brother Edwin to be put in a boat with one servant and turned adrift at sea, because he had plotted against him. Edwin threw himself overboard in despair and was drowned, and the servant came to land and told of his death. We do not know certainly that this is true; and as we find Ethelstan very kind to all his other kinsfolk it is rather unlikely.

Ethelstan and his brother.

3. Ethelstan had many friends abroad, as his father and grandfather had, and it was in his days that messengers came from the great Count of Paris to ask the hand of the fairest of his sisters. They brought him many splendid gifts, one of which was the sword of Constantine, the Emperor, with his name in gold letters graven on it; they brought also the spear of Charles the Great and a beautiful cup carved marvellously with figures, and horses with fine trappings, and many fair jewels. The like of these treasures had never been seen in England before. The Northern books say too that Harold Fairhair sent his little son Hacon to be brought up by Ethelstan. He sent too as a present to Ethelstan a great ship with a gilded prow and a purple sail, and around the bulwarks was a

Ethelstan and foreign kings.

row of shields, gilt and painted. So it came that Hacon was brought up in England, and that he was always known as Ethelstan's foster-son. Hacon afterwards became king in Norway, and a good king he made, worthy of his foster-father's lessons, brave and generous and kindly. He tried to make his people Christian; but this they would not listen to. In 951 he died in battle against his nephew, Harold Grayfell, Eric's son.

4. The mother of Ethelstan was a poor girl, who was brought up by the nurse of his father, Edward. One day while Edward was on a journey he passed near the house of his old nurse, and stopped and went to see her; there he met this poor girl, and fell in love with her for her great beauty. When Ethelstan was born his grandfather Alfred was still alive; and when he saw him grow up a fine boy he became very fond of him, and often prayed that he might be a good and great king. He gave him a purple cloak and a beautiful sword with a golden sheath that hung from a jewelled belt. It was then the custom that when a boy grew up and became a young man he was girt with a sword and belt like a soldier, and was allowed to fight by the side of the men in the day of battle. But Ethelstan was made a soldier when he was yet a boy only six years old. Ethelstan's birth.

5. He was like his mother, handsome to look on, and had long hair that shone like gold. He was kind and good-natured to the poor people, and ready to listen to his chaplains; to his nobles he behaved as a king should, and towards his enemies he was very brave and steadfast. He was open-handed, and when he took spoil in war he dealt it out among his followers. He would never hoard up riches, but all he had he gave away, that it might be used as wisely as possible. When he died all men mourned for him. and his days, though few, were glorious. Ethelstan's character.

CHAPTER III.

EDMUND THE DEED-DOER.—A.D. 940–946.

1. EDMUND, his brother, was made king after him; but, by the counsel of the archbishop of York, the Danes in the North rose against him, and took Anlaf of Ireland for their king. Edmund went against them and won back the Five Boroughs in the north of the Marchland. The English that dwelt therein and had been so long harshly ruled by the Danes were glad, and there was a song written on this great deed.

Edmund and Dunstan.

In 943 Anlaf made peace with Edmund and was baptized, and Edmund gave him great gifts. In the same year Dunstan was made abbot of Glastonbury. He was the son of a great man who lived near Glastonbury, and was brought up at the abbey there. He had been at the court of Ethelstan; but some folks there hated him, so he did not stay long with the king, but was persuaded to become a monk. And now Edmund took him into his favour and gave him Glastonbury to rule. Dunstan ruled it well, rebuilt the church, and kept the monks in good order. He was a wise man and skilled in many things, for he played and sung well, was a good smith, and painted very well. He was also wise in ruling men.

2. In 944 Anlaf of Ireland died, and Anlaf, son of Sigtric, ruled in his stead. He fought against Edmund; but Edmund drove him out, and joined all Northumberland to his own kingdom, so that there were no more kings there, but only *earls*, or governors who ruled for the kings of England.

Edmund's wars.

In the next year Edmund took Cumberland, and gave it to the king of the Scots to rule, and the king of Scots promised in return to be his man and help him in all that he did.

3. In 946 Edmund was slain in this way. He was sitting at meat with his men, and there came in Leof, an outlaw, for it was the feast-day of S. Augustine, and no man would hurt him on that day, and he sat down with the rest. But the king was wroth when he saw his boldness, and bade his cup-bearer turn him out. When he tried to do so Leof withstood him and would have slain him; but the king leaped up from his seat and caught Leof by his hair and threw him down. Then Leof drew a knife and wounded the king to the death; but the king's followers slew Leof on the spot. Dunstan had the king buried at Glastonbury, and mourned greatly for him. Edmund, though he reigned for so few years, did many great deeds, so that men called him Edmund the Deed-doer.

Edmund's death.

CHAPTER IV.

EDRED THE CHOSEN.—A.D. 946–955.

1. THEN reigned Edred, his brother. He was a pious man and ruled well, though he was infirm of body. He hearkened to the words of Dunstan and did what he counselled.

Edred's wars.

The Danes in the North rose against him, and their archbishop with them; but Edred warred against them for three years, till they asked for peace and became his men. They had chosen Eric Bloodax, son of Harold Fairhair of Norway, who had been driven from his own land, to be their king; and he withstood Edred till he fell in fight at Stainmoor. And Edred put the archbishop of York in bonds a little while for the harm he had wrought.

Edred set two earls over Northumberland, one in the north, the other in the south of it, to keep it for him; but that part of it which is called the Lothians, between the Firth and Tyne, he gave to the king of Scots

to hold under him, in the same way as he held Cumberland already. Edred was as generous as his brother, and gave much to the Church. In 955 he died, and Dunstan and all England mourned for him. He has been called the 'Chosen,' or 'Excellent, for his goodness, and there have been few kings like him. For he was, like his grandfather, humble and brave and hard-working.

CHAPTER V.

EDWY ALL-FAIR.—A.D. 955-959.

Edwy's troubled reign.

1. When Edred died, Edwy, the son of Edmund, was crowned king, and his brother Edgar was made under-king in the North. Edwy was very headstrong, and quarrelled with those who had been the greatest friends of Edred.

He married Elfgif; and Oda, the archbishop, did not like this marriage, for he held it was against the law. On the day of Edwy's crowning, when there were many gathered together at the feast, suddenly the king arose from the midst of them and left the hall and went to his wife's bower, leaving all his nobles by themselves. They were wroth at this rude behaviour, and bade Dunstan go and fetch the king back, and he did so.

Soon after this the king drove out Dunstan, who went to Flanders; but Edgar sent for him, and made him a bishop in his part of England. Edwy had another reason for his dislike of him: Dunstan and the best men of the Church at this time were trying to make the monks live better, for they had grown lazy and gluttonous. Edgar and the men of the North were pleased with this; but Edwy and the men of the South set themselves against it. At last the quarrel rose so high about this, and also because of Edwy's foolish acts, that Edgar rose against his brother and would not obey him. It was

not till Oda persuaded Edwy to put away his wife and do as he wished that they were friends again. Some say that the Marchmen took her prisoner and treated her so cruelly that she died; and some say this was done by order of Oda, but others deny it. Soon after this Edwy died, or was slain—we do not know how—and his brother became king of all England. Edwy is said to have been so handsome that he was called All-Fair.

CHAPTER VI.

EDGAR THE PEACE-WINNER.—A.D. 959–975.

1. EDGAR'S rule was very prosperous, and he had peace for the most part of his reign. The first year of his reign Dunstan was made archbishop of Canterbury, and he continued the king's friend and adviser all the days of his life. With him were Oswald, archbishop of York, the nephew of Oda, and Ethelwald, bishop of Winchester. These men also did many good works, for they were wise and skilled in all arts, as Dunstan was. But one plan they had, which was to turn out from the cathedrals the priests who were not monks and put monks in their stead, for they thought that the monks from their strict life would do more good. But the parish priests and those priests who were not monks did not like this, so that there was a quarrel in the Church.

Dunstan and his friends.

2. Edgar at first had to fight against the Scots and Welsh. He made the greatest of the Welsh kings sue for peace, which he gave on condition of his promising to pay him three hundred wolves' heads every year. In those days there were still wolves in England, and they were a great trouble to the farmers and shepherds. Once the men of the North revolted, but Edgar ravaged their land; and some say it was

Edgar's wars.

he, and not Edred, that gave the Lothians to Kenneth to govern.

The crowning of Edgar.

3. In 973 Edgar was solemnly crowned. It is said that the reason he had not been crowned before was that he had done an evil thing. When he repented and confessed his sin the archbishop had told him that he should not be crowned for seven years, as a sign of repentance. However this was, it is certain that there was a very grand feast; and after it Edgar went with his fleet to Chester. There he was met by the kings over whom he was over-lord—five Welsh kings, and Kenneth, king of Scots, and the under-king of Cumberland, and the Norwegian king of the Southern Isles. These eight rowed him on the river in his barge, and he sat and steered. So Edgar held greater state than ever any English king had held before. Even the Danish kings of Dublin bowed to him, and money was struck there in his name. Every year while Edgar lived his fleet sailed round England to guard it, so that no foes could land without a fight.

Edgar's rule and character.

4. When he was dead there began evil days for the English, so that men looked back to his reign when there was peace and good laws. Edgar, like all great kings, was very careful about good laws, and, with the help of Dunstan and the wise men of England, he made many such, and saw that they were kept, and anyone who broke them was sternly punished. Once the men of Thanet plundered some foreign merchants, and when Edgar heard of it he sent an army to punish them, and laid waste all their island.

In his days Peterborough was built up again, which Wolfhere had founded, but it had fallen into decay through the long Danish wars. He made it so rich with precious gifts and lands that it was called the Golden Borough.

Many stories are told about Edgar which, if they were true, would make him out a hot-blooded man; but whether they be true or not he was certainly a good king and ruled his people well, if he could not always rule himself. He was a little man, but very strong, and afraid of nothing. One day while the king of Scotland was sitting at drink with his men he said, 'Wonderful it is to me that so many lands should obey one little man.' A certain minstrel heard this, and told it to Edgar, mocking him. When Edgar heard it he sent for Kenneth, saying that he had certain matters to say to him alone. When he came he took him into a wood apart, and brought out two swords, and gave Kenneth one of them, saying, 'Now let us try which of us is the best man, and see whether I am unfit to rule taller men than myself. Neither shalt thou leave this wood till we have proved this; for unkingly it is to say that at a feast which thou wouldst not hold to in a fray.' And Kenneth was astonished and fell at his feet and prayed his forgiveness, saying that he had spoken but in jest. Then Edgar was content and forgave him.

5. There is another story told of Edgar which, though it may not be true, yet was sung in an old ballad, and it is a famous story. There was a beautiful lady in Edgar's days whose name was Elfthrith, and the fame of her beauty was so great that the king heard of it. So he sent a friend of his, whose name was Ethelwald, to ask her hand for him of her father. But when Ethelwald saw her he fell in love with her himself; so he told the king that she was not so fair as people had said, and instead of the king's marrying her he married her himself. After some time the truth was told the king, and he was very wroth; but he did not show it, and spoke kindly to Ethelwald, and told him he would come and see him. When Ethelwald heard

The story of Elfthrith.

that he was sore afraid. So he went home and told his wife Elfthrith the whole truth, and begged her to make herself as ugly as she could, and dress herself in mean raiment, that the king might not suspect his deceit. But she was very angry because he had prevented her from being a king's wife; so when the king came to the house of Ethelwald she dressed herself in fine raiment and made herself look as handsome as she could. When the king saw how fair she was he was the more enraged, and while he was hunting with Ethelwald he thrust a spear through him so that he died.

Ethelwald had a son before he married Elfthrith, and the young man was by when his father was slain. When the king saw him he said to him, 'What think you of this kind of hunting?' for he was very angry. And the young man answered 'My lord, how should I be displeased at what pleases you?' The king was appeased by his ready answer, and his anger left him. Afterwards he was very kind to him, and gave him great gifts, that he might atone for the slaying of his father. Edgar sent for Elfthrith and married her, so that she became a king's wife after all. She founded a house for nuns also where Ethelwald was slain, that the sin of Edgar might not fall upon her.

CHAPTER VII.

EDWARD THE MARTYR.—A.D. 975–979.

Dunstan and Edward.

1. When Edgar died he left two sons. Elfthrith was the mother of the younger, whose name was Ethelred; the name of the other was Edward. By his will he desired that Edward should be king; and though Elfthrith wished that her little son, who was only seven years old, should be king, Dunstan and the Wise Men chose Edward. Before he was crowned there arose a great quarrel between the North

and South of England about the monks; for Elfhere, alderman of the English March, drove out the monks and filled their places with simple priests; but the great aldermen of Essex and East England gathered a host to defend them. It was the Northern folk that had helped Edgar against his brother; so now they stood out for Edward, while the Southern folk wished for Ethelred. But Dunstan and Oswald, the two archbishops, prevented a war, though Elfhere did many evil deeds against the monks all the days of Edward.

There were many meetings of the great men of England throughout this reign to try and settle things peacefully. At one of these a strange thing happened. While the elders of England were sitting together in an upper chamber the floor suddenly fell, save one beam on which Dunstan was standing. So he was not hurt; but of the others some were sore hurt and others killed. After this men believed more in Dunstan than they did before, for they thought that God had kept him from harm for a sign to them.

2. In 979 an evil deed was done, so that the song of that day says 'no worse deed was done among the English since they first sought the land of Britain.' Edward had been out hunting, and on his way home he rode to the house of his stepmother to ask her if she had seen a favourite dwarf of his whom he had missed. Elfthrith came down to the gate to speak to him, and gave him to drink, for he was very thirsty; but as he was drinking she bade one of her followers stab him in the back, and he did so. When the king felt that he was wounded, he spurred his horse and rode off as fast as he could; but he was so faint that he could not sit in his saddle. So he fell off, and his foot caught the stirrup, and he was dragged along by the frightened horse through the rugged wood till he died. Men said that Elfthrith and Elfhere had plotted to slay him as they

Edward's death.

best could. But Edward was held a martyr; and soon Elfthrith repented her of her evil deed and went into a house of nuns, where she stayed all her days praying for the forgiveness of her sins. Elfhere afterwards brought the body of the king in great state to Shaftesbury Minster, which Alfred had built. Soon after he died of a dreadful disease, and men said God so punished him for his sin.

Edward is said to have been a good king on earth, and after his death a saint in heaven. He was fair to look on, like most of his kinsmen.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHANGES IN ENGLAND UNDER THE GREAT KINGS.

1. UNDER the great English kings many changes had come about. First, the Church had brought men together for one great purpose, and had taught that all Christians were brothers whether they spoke the same tongue or were of the same tribe or not. Moreover the monks, who lived together in *minsters* or large houses, with great lands round them, had kept alive the learning which king Alfred restored, and had taught the English many useful things, so that building and the arts and trades were all bettered. The monks too were great gardeners, and brought into England many new herbs and plants which were useful for medicine or for food. It is to monks that we owe the famous Old English Chronicle, a book which tells us most of all others about Early England. Many other books, chiefly written in Latin, have come down to us from their hands.

The Church.

2. Next the kings had grown more powerful; for not only did they now rule a people instead of a tribe, but they held stricter sway over their subjects, and were more looked up to. Alfred and Edmund had divided the Marchland into shires, for the old tribe

The King.

kingdoms in the Marchland had been swept over by the Danes and their governments destroyed. So these kings divided the land round the great towns which they had fortified, and put a *sheriff* or shire-steward over each shire by the side of the *alderman* to look after its rule. The towns too had grown more important, and more people dwelt in them.

Now that so many kingdoms were held by one king, the King's Council of Wise Men [Witena-gemôt] grew bigger, for the Wise Men of all the different shires, bishops, aldermen, and earls, belonged to it, as well as the king's great officers. And some of these were with the king as he went about, and many Wise Men when he kept state at the great feasts of the year. And they helped him by their advice and carried out his behests.

Another thing came of one king ruling many nations. It was inconvenient for the king to go round to the several *folk-moots* to get laws passed, so he took to calling all the folk-moots to one central place when any new law was to be brought in (which was not very often), and then it was either passed once for all or cast out. This large meeting of the nation was called a *mycel gemôt* or Great Council.

3. The great men of the kingdom were different too from what they had been. The officers of the king's household became great nobles, and the servants of the king became nobles also; so that they were no more called *eorls*, but *thanes*, that is to say, servants. It was not only gentle birth that now gave men power, but service done to the king. From these thanes the king and the wise men chose the sheriffs and aldermen for the shires and under-kingdoms. The nobles too had grown more powerful, for many poor men sought the help of them and their followers, and to gain this they gave their lands to the nobles, who gave them back to them on condition that they worked for them; so that few small men now held their lands quite freely.

The nobles.

4. In the villages and small towns the old family feeling

of the clan had greatly died out; and the yeomen and townsfolk often formed clubs after the manner of the Roman tradesmen and merchants. These clubs were called *guilds*. They were made for helping each other, and for fostering trade and safety against robbers and the like. They held a pastime in every year, which became the town or village feast.

The villages.

5. The coming of the Danes and their settling among the English helped also to change England. It bound the English more together, for they were all obliged to work together against their common foe. The Danes stirred up the minds of the English among whom they settled, for they were more active and restless than they. They also prevented the English where they settled from becoming too much the servants of the great men, for they were too fond of their freedom to let it go easily.

The Danes.

BOOK VII.

THE DANISH CONQUEST.

CHAPTER I.

ETHELRED THE UNREADY.—A.D. 979–1016.

1. ETHELRED, the next king, was not at all like the great kings before him. He was cruel and foolish, and, above all, would not take good advice, but always listened to those who pleased him at the time. He was called the 'Unready,' which did not mean then what it would now mean, but 'Ill-advised.' Men said that his reign was cruel at its outset, wretched in its course, and disgraceful in its end.

Ethelred and Dunstan.

In the first ten years of his reign Dunstan was alive; and though when he crowned him he is said to have prophesied evil of him, because of the cruel deed by which

he came to the throne, yet he helped him with his advice, so that he did no very evil thing while Dunstan lived. When he was crowned the South English were very glad, because they were against the monks, and because the last two kings had been chosen by the Northern English. But the Northern English were very wroth, for they did not like the South Englishmen to rule over them, so they broke away from Ethelred's sway.

When Elfhere died, Elfric was made alderman of the Marchmen. He was a bad man and a traitor, and did little good to England. The king had a quarrel too during this time with the bishop of Rochester, and Dunstan tried to pacify the king; but he would not be stayed. Then Dunstan sent him a gift of money, and he made peace with the bishop. Dunstan was very wroth, and sent this message to the king: 'Because thou hast set silver before righteousness therefore those evils of which I spake shall come upon thee, but not while I live, for so hath the Lord told me.' Dunstan died three years after this (989). And the words which he spake were fulfilled.

2. Already the Danes and Northmen had begun to attack England again; and now Anlaf Tryggwesson the Northman came to England with a great host and did much evil. But in 991 Bertnoth, the alderman of Essex, fought a great battle with the Danes at Maldon. There he fell; but his men stood and fought over his body, and though they lost the day, they saved his body from the heathen, as the Song of Maldon tells us.

The Danes.

In this same year the Great Moot, by the advice of archbishop Sigric, and the example of the Franks, did a foolish thing—laid a tax on the land and raised 10,000*l.*, to give the Danes to buy them off. This tax was called the Dane-gild or Dane-money. The Danes took the money and went away for awhile, but next year came back and ravaged England again to get more, and so it went

on. There was a fleet gathered; but Elfric sent word to the Danes of it, and joined himself to them when they came to London to fight the English. The English beat them, and Elfric fled. Then Ethelred put out the eyes of Elfric's son for the evil deeds of his father, which was a cruel and unkingly deed.

3. Soon after this Anlaf, the Northman, was joined by Sweyn Fork-beard, the king of Denmark. He had passed all his early days in fighting with his father, but now that his father was dead and he was king he began to make war upon England, and a sore foe he was. He and Anlaf beset London with ships, but the Londoners beat them off. Soon after, by the good advice of Elfheg, bishop of Winchester, Ethelred made peace with Anlaf, who was confirmed, and Ethelred became his god-father. Anlaf had been baptized in the Scilly Islands; but the Norwegians were still heathen. Ethelred gave him great gifts, and Anlaf swore to him that he would never ravage England more. He kept his word, and departed to Ireland, and there he married, and soon after was made king of Norway. He ruled well, and by his fair words and example he won over his people to become Christians like himself. In 1001, off Rugen, he fell in a sea-fight against his old friend Sweyn, who plotted against him with the Swedish king and certain Norwegians who hated him. Anlaf was the strongest, handsomest, and most accomplished man of his time. He was the best king that has ever ruled in Norway. To the host of Sweyn and Anlaf 16,000*l.* was given to bribe them to sail away when peace was made with Anlaf.

Anlaf, the Norwegian king.

4. In 997 and the next two years Sweyn came again and plundered Wessex, Sussex, and Kent. At last the Wise Men took counsel and got together a large fleet; but the captains fell to quarrelling among themselves, so nothing was done.

Ethelred's other wars

Next year Ethelred, instead of making his realm safe against the Danes, sent his fleet to fight the Normans. There it sped ill and was driven back. This he did because the Normans had received the Danish ships in their ports. He himself and his army went north and laid waste Cumberland, because Malcolm, the under-king, would not pay him money to help buy off the Danes; for Malcolm said that he was bound to fight for the English king, and would gladly do so, but he would not pay money. Ethelred was angry, and perhaps ashamed, and so he warred against him.

5. The quarrel with Normandy was soon made up, for in the year 1002 Ethelred married Emma, whom the English called Elfgif, the sister of the duke of Normandy. She was a fair woman, but not a good one.

That year the English paid 24,000*l.* to the Danes for peace. So we see they had to give more and more each time, and it was of little avail. Then the king did an evil deed, by the advice of his favourite, Edric Streona (the Gainer). He had all the Danish nobles and soldiers who had remained in the South of England slain on the day of S. Brice. It fell on Saturday, the day the Danes used to bathe; so many were slain defenceless in the evening while they were in their baths. Among the rest was slain Gundhild, sister of Sweyn Forkbeard, who was married to an earl in England named Pallig. They took her and slew her husband before her, and thrust spears through her son so that he died also. She never turned pale, but bore the dreadful sight bravely, and told the English that this deed of theirs would soon bring great evils on their land. When she was slain men marvelled that her face was not changed by death, but that she looked as fair as if she were alive.

The massacre of S. Brice.

6. When Sweyn heard the news of this he was wroth,

and got together a mighty host to avenge her and fulfil the vow which he made once at a great feast that he would drive out Ethelred or die himself. He laid siege to Exeter, and Hugh, the Frenchman, whom queen Emma had set over it (for the king had given it to her as a marriage gift), betrayed it to him, and he took and plundered the city and broke down the wall. Thence he went on to Wessex, where Elfric came against him. Here again was treason, for when the armies were in array Elfric feigned to be suddenly taken ill, and so would do nothing. Sweyn passed by and burned Salisbury, and ravaged the West Saxons' land.

Sweyn's revenge.

7. But Wolfkettle, alderman of the East English, resisted the Danes in the East. When they broke their promise and would not go away, but left their ships and rode up the country, Wolfkettle ordered men to go to the Danish ships to burn them Sweyn was just hurrying back to them, when Wolfkettle fell upon him, and there was a hard fight, so that the Danes said they had never had harder work since they came to England ; but neither side could beat the other, so they both drew off. But because of the disobedience of Wolfkettle's men the Danish ships were left whole, and the Danes sailed off in them to Denmark.

Wolfkettle. A.D. 1004.

8. There was a great famine all over England the next year, so that much folk died of hunger, and that famine was long remembered. In 1006 the Danes came again, and went up to a place called Cuckhamsley, far into England, to defy the old prophecy which said that any foe who got as far as that spot should never come back alive. The king and the Wise Men gave them 36,000*l.* to go away that year. In these days Elfheg became archbishop, and Elfhelm, the Northumbrian earl of York, was treacherously slain by Edric ; but the king made Edric earl of the Marchland.

Danes and Scots.

The Scottish king also invaded England, but the earl Utred of Bamborough drove the Scots from Durham, which they had attacked, and slew many of them. He cut off their heads and set them on spikes round the walls of Durham; and gave the two women who washed the heads before they were set up a cow for a reward.

9. In 1008 Ethelred gathered a great fleet again, and ordered that many new ships should be built, and that all those who held land should pay for them, and this seemed good to the Wise Men. Indeed, if Ethelred had always kept a strong fleet like Edgar's he might have often stopped the landing of the Danes. But quarrels broke out, and the chief men fought among themselves. There came too a great storm which destroyed many ships, and some were burnt in the strife (1009), so all the people's trouble was brought to nought. This was the last chance which Ethelred had of beating the Danes, for from now till he fled away to Normandy there was war, and chiefly with Thorkettle, or Thorkell the Tall, who sailed up the Thames with a fleet of pirates, till in 1013 Sweyn came back.

Ethelred's fleet.

10. Many towns were taken and burnt, and many men were sold into captivity or slain. The good archbishop Elfheg was taken prisoner by Thorkell's host, and they would have him pay a great sum for his ransom; but he said that he would not rob the poor for the sake of himself. They were very angry with him, and one day they brought him to a feast, and after the feast when they were heated with wine they flung at him bones and the heads of the beasts which they had feasted on, till one of them pitying him slew him with a blow of his axe. This happened at Greenwich, so the London people sent for his body, which the Danes gave up to them. It is said that Thorkell offered his soldiers all that he had, except his ships, if

Archbishop Elfheg's death.

they would let Elfheg go unhurt; but they would not. When Thorkell saw his holy death he went over to Ethelred with forty-five ships and their crews, and served him, for he would no more be with heathen men, and he became a Christian.

Then the king sent Edric against the Welsh, and he marched through South Wales and laid it waste. And so it always was with Ethelred; when the Danes came he would do nothing but buy them off; but he would always be ready to fight with the other princes of Britain who were his own under-kings, with whom he should have been at peace.

11. When Sweyn heard that Thorkell had joined Ethelred he was ill-pleased. So he came again to England with his son Canute, and they now set about conquering England, according to Sweyn's vow. First he got the men of the North to submit to him. They had never much liked Ethelred, though they had fought hitherto against the Danes when they came as plunderers or settlers to oust them from their homes. Now that Sweyn came with fair promises, wishing to be king of England, they took him as their king. Leaving his son to rule them while he went south, Sweyn rode right across England and over the Marchland and took Winchester; but Thorkell and Ethelred drove him from London. He went on into the far South and took all the West Saxons' land, and now he was king over all England save London. When Ethelred saw that he fled in Thorkell's ships, with his wife and children, to his brother-in-law's court in Normandy; and the people of London took Sweyn for king.

Sweyn Forkbeard wins England.

Thorkell stayed with part of his fleet and still took king Ethelred's part; but all he could do was to lay taxes on the English to keep his fleet, so that they liked that ill.

Sweyn Forkbeard was not long king, but died as he was on his way to plunder S. Edmundsbury. He thought he saw S. Edmund ride against him and smite him because of his evil errand; but no man saw that sight save the king only, who fell off his horse and was never whole again, but died that night in great pain.

12. Then the Wise Men sent over to Ethelred, in Normandy, to ask him to come back. They told him that they would be glad to have him as king again if he would promise to rule them better; and he promised that he would do as they wished in all matters. The Wise Men said that no Danish king should rule England again, but that if any tried he should be held an outlaw, and any man who could might slay him. Yet the chief men of the Danish host chose Canute to be their king; but he was driven out by Ethelred and his brave son Edmund, who was called Ironside, and went away to Denmark. Ethelred gave the Danes who had served him so well under Thorkell a great sum of money, so that men said the Danes were as greedy and evil friends as they were foes.

Ethelred and Canute. A.D. 1014.

13. In this year there was fought on Good Friday a battle in Ireland, at Clontarf, hard by Dublin, between the Northmen of Dublin and the Western Islands and the head king of Ireland, Brian. There were many heathen among the Northmen, but Brian and his folk were Christians. The Northmen fled before the Irish, and as they fled one of them broke into the tent where Brian was praying for his men, for he was an old man and stricken in years, and there he slew him. So the prophecy was fulfilled which was in men's mouths, that the Northmen should lose the battle, but that Brian should fall. There was a great slaughter, for it was a very high tide, and many men were drowned in the swollen Liffey flying from the fight. This battle the

Brian's battle. A.D. 1014.

Northmen took for a sign that the Christian faith was the best; so after this those who were still heathen turned from their old gods and were baptized.

14. In 1015 there was a meeting of the Wise Men at Oxford, and there Edric wrought another wicked deed. He slew the two chief men of the Five Boroughs of the North Marchland, and when their followers fled to the great tower of the minster he set fire to it, and there were they all slain or burnt. Eldgyth, the widow of one of the chiefs, was spared, and was set in keeping as a prisoner. When Edmund Ironside, the king's son, saw her he married her against his father's will, and ruled the Five Boroughs as her husband. Edric is said to have hated Edmund and to have always acted treacherously towards him. Now, both Edric and Utred had married daughters of Ethelred. Edric and his brothers always advised the king ill; but Utred helped his brother-in-law Edmund.

The burning at Oxford.

15. Then Ethelred fell sick; so Edric led the West Saxons against the Northern English under Edmund. Soon he went over to Canute, who now came back with a mighty host, and they marched over the land plundering it, while Ethelred was in London doing nothing. At last Utred also joined Canute. And soon after Ethelred died.

Ethelred's death.

CHAPTER II.

EDMUND IRONSIDE.—A.D. 1016.

1. THEN the Marchmen chose Edmund king at London; but some of the English chose Canute as king at Southampton. Utred gained little by not staying with Edmund, for Canute sent for him as if he would speak with him; and when he was come

Edmund and Canute.

to the king's hall, there suddenly sprang out upon him a band of men who slew him and the men that were with him, forty souls; and his earldom was given to his enemies. Then Edric turned round again and joined Edmund, but was of little use to him. Canute and Edmund fought five pitched battles this year, all along the borders of Wessex; but Edmund nearly always won, for he was both brave and skilful. Once he met Canute in battle and clove his shield in two with his sword. But the fifth battle at Assandun in Essex was the most famous. Both kings were there, and fought each under his own banner. Edmund's was the golden dragon, and Canute's the magic raven. The raven's wings flapped in the wind, which the Danes took for a sign of victory; but when the battle was joined the Danes at last gave way before the English, and they would have been overcome had not the traitor Edric and his men left the battle. Then the Danes fell on again, and in the end the English were obliged to leave the field to them. In that fight many good men fell, and among them Wolfkettle, the East English alderman, brother-in-law of Edmund.

2. There would have been another battle, but the two kings, by the advice of the Wise Men of England, agreed to make peace, and to divide the kingdom between them. Edmund was to be the head king, and to have the East and South, while Canute was to have the Marchland and Northumberland. It is said that the two kings at first agreed that they two should fight alone, to see who should have all England; but, when they had fought a short while Canute offered to share the realm with Edmund, and he agreed thereto, and they exchanged swords and cloaks and were made sworn friends. This peace which was made at Olney-on-Severn, lasted only a short while, for Edmund died suddenly, and men said that Edric slew him by craft

Peace of Olney. A.D. 1016.

to gain the favour of Canute; and this was the worst of all his evil deeds.

Edmund Ironside was a very big man, bold, quick, persevering and never out of heart; but in one thing he seems to have been foolish, in that he trusted Edric, the alderman of the Marchland, though he knew what evil deeds he had wrought. Perhaps this was because he could not help it, but was afraid of his going over to Canute again. For though Edric was so bad he seems to have been very powerful in his own earldom, and he was a man of such guile that Edmund may have thought it better to have him as a friend than as a foe. It is to be remembered too that we only have the story as told by Edric's enemies. So that after all he may not have been so bad as they would make out. For that he should have been so wicked, and yet so much trusted, it is very hard to believe.

CHAPTER III.

CANUTE THE GREAT.—A.D. 1016–1035.

1. CANUTE began his reign by trying to settle his English kingdom, for of all the kingdoms that he had then and afterwards he loved England best. First he outlawed those of the English blood-royal that were in England; and when the wise men gave him the care of the children of Edmund Ironside he sent them to his kinsman King Mecesclav of Russia. It is said that he asked him to slay them; for he would not slay them himself for the brotherhood that he had sworn with their father. But Mecesclav would not, and sent them to Stephen, who was the first Christian king of Hungary, that he might take care of them. And they abode a long time at his court.

Canute and Edmund's children.

2. Canute set earls as governors over the land; but he kept Wessex himself, for there he chiefly lived. He gave the Marchland to Edric; to Thorkell he gave East England: to Eric, when he had married his sister, he gave Northumberland; and these great men ruled the land under him. But Edric was angry because the king did not give him more power, and it is said that he told the king that he had slain Edmund Ironside for his sake. When Canute heard these words he bade his followers slay Edric, saying that he who had betrayed his lord for lands and gold would never be faithful to him. So Edric was slain in the king's sight, and was cast out of the window into the river that ran below. Men held that Canute had done very rightly, for through the evil deeds of Edric many good men had met their death; and he was so crafty and powerful that he was able to do much evil. Canute also sent Earl Thorkell from England into Denmark, to rule it under him, for he wished to rule England by Englishmen.

Edric's death.

3. In the same year, 1017, Canute sent to Normandy and asked the duke to give him Emma, Ethelred's widow, in marriage, for she had fled thither with her children. He did so; and Emma came back and was again Lady of the English; and she bore Canute two children, Gundhild and Hardi-Canute. Gundhild married King Henry, who was afterwards made Emperor; but Hardi-Canute became king.

Canute and Emma.

4. Canute now set two Englishmen in power, who became very famous men, Leofric and Godwin. Leofric was made earl of the Marchmen, and Godwin was made earl of Wessex, under the king. Leofric was a good man, and tried to bring about peace in England whenever the great men fell out. Godwin was a man of ready speech, and became the greatest

Canute and the great earls.

man in England next the king, and his sons became earls as well as himself. Canute was so pleased at his wisdom and bravery in a war which he had in the Baltic, one time when he was away from England, that he singled him out and trusted him with an earldom.

5. Canute was not only king of England and Denmark and over-lord of the Northmen who dwelt in Ireland, but he drove out and slew Anlaf the Saint, king of Norway, and was chosen king there. The Scots also acknowledged him as their over-lord; but he had to make war with them for attacking England while he was away at Rome. Then they made peace and submitted to his commands.

Canute's mighty power.

6. Canute went twice to Rome, it is said, to atone for his evil deeds. While he was there in 1027 he wrote a long letter home to the English people, in which he told them all about his journey and the kings whom he had met, and how he had spoken with the Pope. He also promised to rule them well, and never take money unjustly from them, and to make all his great men do right also. He said too that he had never spared any trouble for his people's good, and that he never would. These promises he fulfilled; for though he had done some stern things to the great men, he had never done harm to his people since he was made king. He set good laws very strictly against all evildoers, so that in after-days his name became famous as a law-giver To the Church he was very open-handed, and he gave a splendid altar covering, embroidered with peacocks, to Glastonbury, where the body of king Edmund Ironside lay. He built a church at Assandun, and set Stigand, who afterwards became a famous man, to pray and preach in it. This he did as a token of thankfulness and remembrance of the battle that he had fought there. Canute was a great friend of the monks also.

Canute's rule.

It is said that when Emma's brother was dead his son, duke Robert, who soon after reigned in Normandy, gathered together a fleet to conquer England, drive out Canute, and put on the throne Emma's two sons, who were still in Normandy; but the weather was bad, and such of the ships as were not destroyed were obliged to put back.

7. Canute was a little man, but strong of body, and exceeding wise and crafty, so that no man knew his real mind. He gave freely to strangers, but was careful of his money, and not fond of useless spending, for he was not willing to burden his people. He was more loved by the English than by the Danes, for he set Englishmen, and not Danes, as earls in England; and he would not suffer the Danes to spoil England, as they wished, but he ruled as an English king, and not like a foreign conqueror. He was fond of music and singing, and loved poetry. One day, while he was being rowed in his barge to Ely, he heard the song of the monks at their service in the minster ringing across the water, so he made a song :— Canute's character.

> Merry the monks of Ely sing
> As by them rows Canute the King—
> Row, men, to the land more near,
> That we these good monks' song may hear.

Other verses also he put to it; and this song was held in remembrance by the monks of Ely, for he was a good friend to them, and gave them many gifts.

He was a godly-minded man at the end of his reign. It is told of him that one day he ordered his chair to be set on the sand by the sea when it was low water. When the tide began to rise he spoke to the sea, and forbade it to rise; but the water rose till it washed round his chair and wetted his feet and garments. Then he

arose and said to those that were with him, 'Though kings be mighty and rule wide realms yet will not the seas obey them; therefore to God alone be honour and praise, for he rules all things, and the wind and the seas obey Him.' This he did as an example, lest men should honour man and forget God who made them. And never after that day would he wear his crown, but he set it on the head of the image of Jesus on the Cross that was in the old church at Winchester.

Canute was very fond of hunting, and made laws that no man should hunt in the lands which were under the care of the king.

8. Canute kept a great many men always about him, like a little army, and men came from all the North lands to serve in his guards, so that there were not in all the world at that time such soldiers as they. He made rules for them also that all things might be done in order; and it was by help of this guard that he was able to do such great deeds in war. He sent to Denmark many English priests, who taught his own people several English customs which he thought would be useful to them; for the English were not so rude a folk as the Danes were.

Canute's guards and priests.

CHAPTER IV.

HAROLD-HAREFOOT AND HARDI-CANUTE. A.D. 1035-1042.

1. CANUTE had two other sons besides Hardi-Canute, Harold, called Harefoot for his swiftness, and Sweyn; but Emma was not their mother. He divided his kingdoms among the three. To Sweyn he gave Norway, and to Hardi-Canute, Denmark, but he gave England to Harold. When Canute was dead it

Canute's sons.

was not at all sure what men would do; for Godwin and Emma and the English in the South were for Hardi-Canute; but the men of the North and Leofric and the seamen of London, who were most of them Danes, would have Harold for their king, as Canute had wished. It was settled at last, by Leofric's advice, that Harold should rule in the North, and Hardi-Canute in the South. But Hardi-Canute stayed in Denmark, and his mother and Godwin ruled for him in England.

2. Next year, 1036, Alfred and Edward the Ethelings, sons of Ethelred, came to England out of Normandy, and a train of Normans with them. It is not certain why they came, for their mother loved Hardi-Canute rather than them. Some say it was to gain the kingdom of the south part of England, as Hardi-Canute was away. But Godwin stopped them, and Alfred was seized by some men of Harold, who blinded him and brought him to Ely, where he died; and his men they slew cruelly with torments. But his mother sent Edward back to Normandy. It was said that both Godwin and Emma had a hand in this evil deed, though it was done by Harold's men. And there was a song made about it which says no darker deed had been done in England since the Danes came.

The death of Alfred.

3. At last men grew weary of waiting for Hardi-Canute, and his mother was not much liked; so the South English also chose Harold as their king, and drove Emma out of England. She went to Flanders, where Baldwin ruled, and he received her kindly, and thither came her son Hardi-Canute to visit her. Not long after this Harold died (1040), and the great men of England sent messengers to Flanders to pray Hardi-Canute to come and reign over them; and he came over, and was crowned king; and he brought his mother back with him.

Emma banished. A.D. 1037.

4. Hardi-Canute did not reign long. He was a very stern king, and not much liked, save by those about his court, for he kept great state, and gave them all four meals a day. He ordered the body of his brother to be dug up and cast out into a sewer, that he might dishonour it as much as he could. A heavy tax was laid upon England to pay for the Danes of the fleet which he brought with him.

Hardi-Canute. A.D. 1040.

At that time Godwin was accused of having caused the death of Alfred the Etheling; but he denied it on oath, and most of the great men took an oath that they believed him guiltless. So nothing was done to him; and he gave the king a great ship as a gift, that he might not bear any anger against him. It was beautifully painted and gilt; in it were eighty soldiers, clothed in red, with gold rings on their arms and gilt helmets on their heads, and on one shoulder they bore a Danish axe (for the Danes at that time used to fight with great axes, which they wielded with both hands), and in their right hand a spear of iron. Round about the ship were laid their shields, painted and gilt. This was the finest ship that had been seen in England since the ship that Harold Fairhair sent to Ethelstan.

The king sent his guard to gather in the tax which had been laid upon England; but the people at Worcester rose against them and slew two of them. When the king heard of this he was angry, and bade Godwin and Leofric and Siward, the Danish earl of the North (for earl Eric was now dead), ravage Worcester. So they burnt the city; but they let the people go.

Soon after this Hardi-Canute sent for his half-brother Edward to come to England to live with him and his mother, and he came over.

One day king Hardi-Canute went to the wedding feast of one of his great men, and while he was standing

up to drink he was seized with an illness and fell to the earth and never spoke word more.

He was a king of whom we know very little, and not much good. Neither he nor his brother Harold left any children.

BOOK VIII.

THE TWO LAST OLD-ENGLISH KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.—A.D. 1042-1066.

Edward's first years of rule.

1. WHEN Hardi-Canute died, Edward, his half-brother, was chosen king. This was chiefly done by the help of Godwin and his men; for some would have had Sweyn, king of Denmark, cousin of Hardi-Canute, as king. Many of those who had been against Edward were outlawed when he became king. Edward took away a good part of his mother Emma's riches because she had not helped him in his need; but he suffered her to live quietly at Winchester.

In 1045 Edward married Edith Godwin's daughter, and thus bound himself closer to the house of Godwin. At this time the three greatest men in England were Godwin, Leofric, and Siward the Big, the earl of Northumberland; and they ruled all England under the king. But Edward did not long remain friendly to the house of Godwin; for he was too fond of foreigners, and especially of the Normans, and from this arose great trouble afterwards.

King Magnus, Saint Anlaf's son, who was now reigning in Norway, had been a friend of Hardi-Canute. They had agreed that whichever died first the other should have his kingdom. When Magnus got neither

Denmark nor England he was angry and gathered a great fleet to come to England; but Sweyn, the Danish king, stopped him: so the English fleet which Edward had summoned had nothing to do.

2. Godwin had many children, and of these the two eldest, Sweyn and Harold, were now earls in England. Harold over the East English, and Sweyn over the West border over against the Welsh. Sweyn kept his earldom well, and defeated the Welsh when they attacked the English; but in 1047 he took the abbess of Leominster away from her abbey and wished to marry her. This shocked people very much, because it was against the laws of the Church: so he was forced to leave England and went off to Flanders, and his earldom was given to Harold his brother, and to his cousin Beorn the Dane, brother of Sweyn, king of Denmark, who had had an earldom in the middle of England. After he had been away but a little while he came home and prayed the king to forgive him, and give him back his earldom. But Harold and Beorn would not give up the rule of it to him, so the king would not let him stay in England. Then Sweyn entired Beorn to come on board his ship and go with him to plead for him to the king. But when Beorn was on board he slew him. For this foul crime Sweyn was outlawed by all the people, and most of his friends forsook him. And Harold had Beorn buried in great honour. But Sweyn repented of the treacherous deed that he had done in his wrath, and the good bishop Eldred prayed the king and the Wise Men to forgive him, so he was inlawed, and his earldom was given back to him.

Earl Sweyn's outlawry.

3. Now, Sweyn king of Denmark and king Edward were friends, for they were related through the house of Godwin, and Sweyn had helped Edward against Magnus; but king Magnus gathered

King Sweyn of Denmark.

another great host against Sweyn, so that he was hard put to it to hold his own. So he sent to pray Edward to help him. Godwin spoke for his kinsmen, and would have fifty ships sent; but Leofric and most of the Wise Men were against this. So no help was sent to Sweyn; but when Henry the Emperor quarrelled with Baldwin of Flanders, the English sent him help. Sweyn was driven from his kingdom; but Magnus died not long after, and his uncle Harold Hardrede (the stern of counsel), who had reigned with him part of his reign, reigned alone in his stead. Then Sweyn soon got back his kingdom.

4. In Wales about this time there were two great kings called Griffith, who were nearly always fighting against each other and against the English. While Sweyn Godwin's son was away, the South Welsh king joined the fleet of the Danish sea-rovers and made a raid into England. But Eldred gathered together against them all the men who dwelt on the border; but the Welsh that were with him turned upon him and joined their brethren when the battle began, and he was defeated and most of his men slain.

Welsh and Eldred.

5. In 1050, Edward made Robert, a Norman monk, archbishop of Canterbury. He had before been bishop of London. He was a great foe to Godwin and his house, so that he filled the ears of the king with stories against them. By his advice many Normans were set in bishoprics and high places in England. They did no good, but built castles and strongholds, that they might be safe against any attack from the English, and could oppress them as they would.

The foreigners in England. Godwin outlawed.

One day the king's brother-in-law Eustace, who was a Frenchman, had been to see the king, and was riding back to the sea to pass over to his own earldom of Boulogne. When he and his men came to Dover

they behaved lawlessly and wished to make the townsmen lodge them where they would. And one of them struck a townsman. Then a fight began, and many were slain on either side; but at last the men of Dover drove them out of the town. Then Eustace rode back to the king and complained of the Dover folk, and told the story his own way. The king was very angry, and bade Godwin the earl go and punish them. But Godwin said he would not till they also had been heard, and he told the king that the Frenchmen ought to be punished. Then the king sent for Leofric and Siward; and Godwin summoned his folk, and it was like to have come to a battle between the two armies. But Leofric thought it better that the Wise Men should be called together to settle the matter. When the Wise Men met they outlawed Sweyn again, and called Godwin and Harold, his son, to come alone before them; but they would not come unless safe-conducts were given them. So the Wise Men outlawed Godwin and his kin. Then Godwin, Sweyn, and Gurth, his sons, went to Flanders, where Tostig, another son of his, had just been married to Judith, Baldwin's daughter. But Harold went to Ireland, to Dermot, king of Leinster, a great friend of the house of Godwin. And Edward sent his wife, Godwin's daughter, into a nunnery, and Harold's earldom he gave to Elfgar Leofric's son.

William of Normandy in England.

6. While Godwin was away William duke of Normandy came to visit Edward in England, and the king, who was childless, is said then to have promised him the kingdom at his death. This William came to the dukedom when he was but seven years old, after his father Robert who died while he was away on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He had hard work to keep his dukedom when he was young, for the Norman nobles were very proud and restless, and looked down on him because his mother was the daughter

of a tanner. And when he grew older, his neighbour the king of France coveted his duchy, though at first he had helped him, because he thought he could do as he liked seeing that William was so young. But by his great skill and bravery he had overcome all his foes, and was now one of the greatest men of the age. He was tall and strong, and a strict but just ruler, who had the gift of choosing good men for his servants, unlike Edward in this. He was a good friend to the Church, and built splendid minsters. But he was stern, and when he wished for anything he would have it, and recked of no man or thing that stood in his way. He was a lover of hunting, and passed as much of his time as he could spare in that sport. He was a great archer, and his bow few men but he could bend. In this taste Edward was like him; for though he was a pious man he thought more of hunting than anything else but the Church.

7. Things went ill while Godwin was away. Griffith of North Wales broke into England and did much damage; and Harold ravaged the South coast. At last Godwin and Harold gathered a great fleet and sailed to London; and the king gathered all the men he could against them. But Stigand proposed as before that the Wise Men should judge between them. They inlawed Godwin and his kin, and the queen was taken back by the king. But Robert the Norman and the Frenchmen, whom Edward loved, took horse when they heard this news and rode through London, cutting and hewing at all in their way till they got to the river; then they took ship and went to Normandy. Stigand was made archbishop in Robert's room, for he was a great friend of Godwin. But Robert took this much to heart, and never ceased complaining to the Pope and the duke and the princes abroad of the loss which he had suffered. And as he told the story his own way many

Godwin inlawed.

thought the English had done wrong and that they were impious folk.

8. Soon after this, in 1053, it is said that Godwin was sitting at meat with the king, and the king was being served by Harold and Tostig, Godwin's sons. One of them slipped, and the other helped him. Then said Godwin, 'So brother helps brother.' But the king said, 'My brother would have helped me hadst thou not slain him.' And Godwin said, 'If I slew thy brother or had a hand in his death may this piece of bread choke me.' Then he broke a piece of bread and put it in his mouth, but it stuck in his throat and choked him, and he fell down and never spoke again. And all men marvelled that the words which he had spoken were fulfilled. Then the king bade them cast his body out like a dog's for his false oath and his evil deed. But this story is told by the Normans, who hated Godwin, and it is not likely to be true. The English mourned greatly for Godwin, for he upheld England and did right while he ruled, and advised the king well; and he hated the foreigners, whom they also hated. Now that he was dead all men's eyes were turned to Harold, and he was made earl of Wessex after his father, and had the greatest power all Edward's days, so that no man did anything against his will, and he advised the king well.

Godwin's death.

9. In those days Macbeth slew king Duncan and became king of all Scotland in his place. But Duncan's kin went to Siward the Big, who received them well, and fought for Malcolm against Macbeth. In the end Macbeth was slain, and Malcolm Big-head became king of Scotland. In 1055 Siward died. When he felt that his death was near he arose from his bed and called for his coat of mail, and put it on, and took his sword in his hand, and died so, sitting in his chair; for he said he would not die like a cow, but like a soldier in mail. His

earldom was given to Tostig Godwin's son, for Waltheof the Big, Siward's only living son, was as yet a child.

10. About this time earl Elfgar, son of Leofric, was twice outlawed, and twice he got the Welsh king to join him in attacking England. But peace was made by his father, who soon after died; and Griffith, king of Wales, married Elfgar's daughter Edith. Earl Harold was at this time on a pilgrimage to Rome.

The Welsh.

And now Edward, son of Edmund Ironside, and his children came home to England. But he died soon after he landed, and his children were brought up by the king.

In 1063 there was a great war with Griffith, the Welsh king, who was now king of all Wales, for he would not keep the peace, but plundered the English border; so Harold and Tostig went against him with a fleet and an army. At last they beat him, and he bowed to the English king. But his own folk slew him soon after because of the trouble he had brought upon them. His head and the prow of his ship were sent to king Edward; and his realm was given to his brothers, and they swore to be faithful to the English king.

11. About this time Harold was out in a ship with his brother, and was driven to the coast of France. The earl of the place where he was wrecked put him in prison. But William, the Norman duke, made the earl set Harold free, and brought him to his court. There he stayed some while and helped William in his war against the people of Brittany. And William made him swear that he would help him to be king of England when Edward died, and Harold had to swear this, for he was in William's power.

Harold at Duke William's court.

12. Soon Tostig and the Northumbrians fell out, for they were a very wild and lawless folk, and Tostig was over-stern, and at last slew some of them at a feast to which he bade them. So the men of

Earl Tostig outlawed.

Northumberland chose Morcar Elfgar's son to be their earl in Tostig's stead. Then Tostig went to king Edward, to pray for his help; for Edward and Edith loved him best of all the house of Godwin. And Edwin, Morcar's brother, who had succeeded his father Elfgar in his earldom, brought an army of Marchmen and Welshmen to help Morcar. Harold tried to make peace, and get the Northumberland men who had marched South to take back Tostig; but they would not. When the Wise Men judged the matter they outlawed Tostig; and he went away to Baldwin, his father-in-law; but Edward was ill-pleased at this.

Edward's death.

13. In 1066 Edward died, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey, which he had built. And all men held him a saint, and he was called *Confessor* for his zeal for the Church.

Edward was a handsome man and of goodly presence; his hair and his beard were white as snow. He was very pious, and did his best to rule well, and in his days England was mighty and at peace from foreign foes. But he was weak and often took bad advice; he was quick-tempered also, and through this sometimes unjust. Yet men loved his memory, for they remembered the good days when he was a king in the evil days that fell on England after his death.

CHAPTER II.

HAROLD GODWIN'S SON.—A.D. 1066.

Harold and William.

1. BEFORE Edward died he advised the Wise Men to choose Harold king after him, and they did so, and Eldred, archbishop of York, crowned him. Soon after he married Griffith's widow, the sister of Edwin and Morcar. When William heard all this he was so angry that he could hardly speak, for he remembered the

promise of king Edward and the oath that Harold had sworn. And he determined to be king of England and thrust Harold out. So he persuaded his nobles to join him; and he fitted out a large fleet and hired soldiers from all parts till he had a large army. And he sent to the Pope and told him how Harold had broken his oaths. Also, he promised the Pope great gifts and much gold when he became king of England, if he would bless his enterprise. The Pope, hearing these things and the complaints of Robert, and all the evil stories that the Normans told of the English and the house of Godwin, blessed William's undertaking and sent him a holy banner.

Harold, also, gathered a large fleet to defend England, and it is said that the two fleets fought a battle, and that the English drove the Normans back.

2. When Harold was made king, Tostig went to William to ask help to get back his earldom, which Harold would not give him. But William would promise nothing; so he went on to the King of Sweden and prayed him to try and conquer England, as his kinsman Canute had done. But Sweyn said he had much ado to keep Denmark. Then Tostig begged Harold Hardrede [the Stern], king of Norway, to come now and conquer England, which had been promised to his nephew Magnus. Harold Hardrede at last consented; though some of his great men advised him not to try this great deed and jeopard his life and kingdom; for they said the guard of Harold Godwin's son were the best soldiers in the world, and that one of them was as good as any two other men.

Tostig and King of Denmark and Norway.

3. King Harold Hardrede was a famous warrior; he had fought by the side of his brother Saint Anlaf when he was only fourteen, and was wounded in the battle where he fell. He had passed a great part of his youth in Russia, where kings of Swedish blood

Harold Hardrede.

then ruled. Afterwards he served the Emperor of the East at Constantinople and commanded his guards. He had been to Jerusalem, and fought the heathen in the Mediterranean, and had slain a great snake or crocodile. He had also sailed West over the main to seek the new land [North America] lately found by certain Icelanders, but the ice drove him back. He was a good poet and a good speaker; and so strong and big of body that there were few men his match. He was also rich, for he had brought gold and much spoil from his searoving in the service of the Emperor of the East.

4. Harold set sail with a great fleet, and Tostig joined him off Northumberland. They landed at Tynemouth, where Edwin and Morcar met them; but Harold overcame them, and the men of York made peace with him.

But when Harold Godwin's son heard of this he gathered his guard and such men as he could and marched north up the Roman Way against his brother and the king of Norway. He came on them unawares, as most of the Northmen were down at their ships, and few that were with the king and Tostig had their coats of mail on, for the day was very hot. When the English host came in sight Tostig counselled Harold to go back to the ships to the rest of the army and fight the English there. But Harold Hardrede would not give way, though he sent messengers to the fleet to bid Eystein, his marshal, bring up his men. Then he rode through his host on a black horse and set his men in array. As he rode, his horse slipped and he fell; but he got up citing a verse from an old song, 'A fall is lucky for a traveller.' But when Harold Godwin's son saw him fall, he said, 'That is a big man and fair of face, but his luck has left him.' Then he and a few men with him rode between the two hosts up to the Northmen's army, and called out, 'Is Tostig Godwin's

Stamford Bridge.

son here?' And Tostig came forth. Then he said, 'Harold offers Tostig peace and a third of his kingdom, for he would not that brother should fight brother.' Tostig answered, 'What shall be given to Harold of Norway for his journey hither?' And Harold said, 'Seven feet of English ground, or a foot over, for he is taller than other men.' But Tostig answered, 'It shall never be said that Tostig left his friends in the lurch for the offers of his foes. We will either win England by our swords or die here like men.' Now, Harold Hardrede was by them and heard all that was said, and he asked who it was that spoke so well. Tostig told him, 'It was my brother Harold.' Then said the king, 'If I had known this he should not have gone back to tell of our folks' death.' But Tostig said, 'He did unwisely in this; but I might not betray my brother who offered me such great things; and I would rather that he should slay me than I him, if one of us two must die.' Harold Hardrede said to them that were with him, 'That was a little man, but he sat well in his stirrups.' Then he put on his coat of mail and took his sword in both hands, and stood in front of his banner, which was called Land Waster. And the English fell upon the Northmen; but they kept their array till the fight waxed so fierce that they grew too eager and broke their ranks. Then the English drove them back to the River Derwent behind them, and they fell back across the river as well as they could. And the English pressed hard on them. But one Northman kept the bridge against the English till most of his fellows were across, and many Englishmen he slew, till one got under the bridge and thrust up a spear through the plank, and it struck him under the belt, and then he fell. When the English got over the bridge, the Northmen formed up again, and king Harold Hardrede went in front of his host, and fought so fiercely that no man

could stand before him, for he slew all that he could strike at. At last an arrow hit him in the throat over his mail coat, and that was his death-wound. Then Tostig went up to the banner in his place. Harold Godwin's son again offered his brother peace and quarter to the Northmen. But they all cried out, 'We will take no peace from the English, but rather fall one man over another where we stand.' And now Eystein came up from the ships and the fiercest fight began, and the English were hard put to it, for the Northmen grew so wroth that they threw down their shields and fought like madmen. But the English kept cool and fought on warily; and at last when Tostig and the chief men were slain the Northmen gave way and fled to their ships. And it was now evening. Next day Harold Godwin's son made peace with Harold's sons. Then they put to sea and went back home. And Harold king of England went to York and kept a feast there.

5. Four days after this battle William landed with all his host at Pevensey, for the English fleet was up North with Harold. He set up a castle of wood at Hastings and ravaged the land all round. When news of this was brought to Harold, he marched South to London with his guard, bidding Edwin and Morcar gather their men and follow him. But they held back; for they thought that if Harold was slain they would share England with William. Then Harold gathered the men of Kent and of London and many country folk, and marched from London to Senlake, near Hastings, and lay on the hill there by a hoar apple-tree. There were with him Gurth and Leofwin, his brothers, and most of his kin. Gurth begged Harold to lay waste the land, that William might not get food or march on, and then go back himself to London and gather forces there and leave him to fight William, instead of Harold, because

William's landing.

of the oath which Harold had sworn. But Harold said, 'I was made king to cherish this folk; how shall I lay waste this land of theirs? Nor does it befit an English king to turn from his foes. But thy advice is wise.'

6. Now, William and his men lay in the open land below. And both hosts made ready for the fight that was to be fought on the morrow. The English spent the night watching by their fires, singing merrily, and eating and drinking. The Normans did not feast; but Odo, bishop of Bayeux, William's brother, went through the host praying with the men. On the morrow both hosts went forth to battle. Harold had made a ditch and a strong pale of stakes along the front of his line, and in the centre, by his two standards (the golden dragon of England, and his own with the image of a fighting man on it), he set his guard and the men of Kent and London. They were all armed in coats of mail, and had great two-handed axes and broadswords and javelins. But at the back and sides of the hill he put his worst soldiers and the country folk, who were ill-armed with darts and slings and clubs. The English all fought on foot, as was the custom in the North. Harold bade his men keep the pale and drive off their enemies; but he told them not to leave their posts, or the Normans would get inside and drive them off the hill.

Battle of Hastings.

William set his men in order also. In the midst he and his brother were with the Norman knights, all on horseback, clad in coats of mail, with long lances in their hands, and broadswords by their sides; there too was the banner which the Pope had hallowed. In front were the archers, of whom he had a great many, but they were on foot. On the right he put the French knights who were with him, and on the left the men of Brittany; for he was over-lord of Brittany. The first man that began the attack was a Norman minstrel, who rode up against

the English, throwing up his sword and catching it, and singing a war-song of the mighty deeds of Roland and Charles the Great. He slew two Englishmen who came forth against him before he fell himself. Then the battle was joined. The Normans charged up against the English; but the English kept the pale and cut down man and horse with their great axes. In vain the Normans tried twice over to break their line. Then they began to give back, and men cried out that William was slain; but he threw off his helmet, that all might know him and cried, 'I live, and will yet win the day by God's help.' And he and his brother Odo again got their men in array and charged again up the hill. William and Odo fought ever foremost, and at last they got close up to the English standards. Gurth threw a spear at William, which missed him and slew his horse. But William slew Gurth with his sword: there fell also Leofwin, his brother, and many Normans and English. But the Normans got on best to the right, for there they broke down the pale.

Then William, to make the English leave their post, ordered his men to pretend to flee. And when the English saw them turn they disobeyed Harold and rushed down after them, leaving the hill bare. Then the Normans turned and smote them in the open field and pressed on to the hill-top, where Harold and his guard were nearly alone; but though they were now fighting on level ground they could not drive back Harold and his guards. So William ordered his archers to shoot up into the air, that the arrows might fall upon the English; for they could not use their shields, as they had both hands to their axes. One arrow struck Harold in the eye, and he fell dying at the foot of his standard. Then the Normans made a last rush, beat off the English and broke down the standards, and Eustace and three other knights slew Harold as he lay on the ground and mangled his body. But the

English drew off fighting to the last, and many of the Normans that followed them were slain, for they turned on them in a swampy place, where their horses were of no use.

7. William pitched his tent among the dead on the height where the standards had stood, and his host stayed there all night. Next day there came many English women to bury their dead; for William gave them leave; but though Harold's mother offered its weight in gold for his body he would not give it her. But when it was found mangled under a heap of dead by an English lady—Edith Swan's-neck, whom Harold had dearly loved—he bade them bury it under a stone-heap on the cliffs, for he said, 'He kept the shore well while he lived; let him keep it now he is dead.' Harold's burial.

So fell the last Old-English king fighting against the foreigners. And after a while William was chosen king of the English, for there was no man now that could withstand his might; and Edgar, the son of Edward Etheling, Edmund Ironside's son, whom some would have made king, was hardly old or wise enough to rule, even if they could have driven out William.

Harold was a strong, handsome, and accomplished man. Like his father he was a good soldier, a good speaker, and a good man of business. As Edward's minister he was much beloved by the English for his good rule and the way in which he put down the Welsh and forced them into peace. But, like his father, he did not get on well with the Church; for he disliked Edward's foreign priests and bishops, and did not favour the monks. It shows what a good ruler the English must have thought him that they made him king; though he was not of the royal blood of their English kings, but only of kin to the Swedish kings.

CHAPTER III.

CHANGES IN ENGLAND.

1. THE battle of Hastings, though it only made William ruler at first over part of England, yet by the death of Harold really gave him his crown. Though parts of England held out against him for years, yet in the end he brought it all under him. The battle of Hastings was not a battle that the English need be ashamed of, for they fought manfully; and if Harold had only lived no doubt William's army would have been too weak to stand against the fresh English levies which he could have brought up. Now, too, the English had no great leader, for no other Englishman was as good a commander as Harold. If Harold had lived the English would have had some standard to rally round; but as it was each man looked to his own interest. The Northmen stood by Edwin and Morcar, the South English wished for Edgar Etheling, and the East English would fain have had a Danish king. It was this want of union, and not lack of bravery, that overcame them.

What followed Harold's death.

2. For though the great English kings had brough the smaller kingdoms under their power, yet it was the foreign kings, and William most of all, that made England one. Even Canute founded the power of the great families whose quarrels still kept the different parts of the country separate during Edward's reign. But with Harold the power of Godwin's sons fell. Edwin and Morcar were forced to submit; and Waltheof Siward's son was still very young. So that William, taking care to prevent the rise of any new families which might get a like power, at last made England completely one. Really the whole history

Fate of the Great Earldoms.

of England, from the days when it became Christian till the Norman Conquest, is the story of struggles for this end, and this is what we have tried to trace.

It was a good thing that England should be one; for only by all Englishmen standing and working together could the great things which have been done in England have been brought about.

3. Little by little the English had been passing from a state of things in which a free man lived on his own land and every shire managed its own business by itself into what is called a *feudal* government, where every man was under some lord, of whom he held his land, and the lords were under the king, of whom they held theirs on condition that they fought for him and helped him in every way. As the lords grew powerful some of them became unjust and greedy to their tenants, and many of the smaller people in the south fell bit by bit into a wretched state of slavery to the lords. But William had long seen the mischief of this, and did his best to stop it in England, by keeping up the older English laws. Thus he ordered that every one, no matter whose man he was, should swear to obey the king. For the feudal lords held that if they made war on the king, all their servants must fight in their lords' quarrel, though they also were the king's subjects; but this King William would not brook, and he made all men swear to obey him, and be faithful to him, whosever lord's they were.

Feudalism.

This, and much other good which the coming of William did, will be told in the story of his reign.

4. We have brought the History of England and the English folk down through six hundred years. And we see that our forefathers were not unlike the English country-folk of to-day. There was the lord, like the squire and rich folk of to-day; and the yeoman, like our farmer; and the thralls

England under the later kings.

and landless men, like our labourers and workmen. And though there were no great factories, or mills, or manufactures, there were traders like our shopkeepers and merchants; and the English, under their later kings, began to go abroad much more and trade with other lands.

The cities, also, by the time of the Norman Conquest, were filled with folk; for the English, as they became less rude, began to live in towns, and in these towns many crafts flourished. Moreover, the coming of the Danes and the Canute's rule over all the coasts of the North Sea had brought the English to take more to the sea and a seafaring life, which they had given over a good deal when they came and settled in England. The Danes who settled here were great sailors, and at London there were many of them, so that it soon became the first and greatest city in England.

There was a parish priest in every big village, and besides these there were many houses of monks; so that the Church had quite as much power in the nation as it has to-day, and perhaps more.

There were about 2,000,000 people in England at the time of the battle of Hastings—twice the number that had lived in Britain when the English came. But the great change that took place during these six hundred years is, that the free Englishman had become the member of a great nation instead of being the tribesman of one of many small tribes; that he was learning to care not only for the welfare of his family and his shire, but for the good of the whole state and of every other Englishman.

To finish, we see in this part of English History, as in all times afterward, that all the true good work that was done lasted, and brought good with it; and that good men, though they often fared ill in their lives and died cruel deaths, yet did not die in vain. For others took courage

by their example and carried on the work they had been forced to leave unfinished. We see too that every evil deed bore its fruit in hindering the good and lessening the happiness of men. But when the wicked died their names were held in hate and their deeds were loathed; while the good deeds of the righteous were held in honour, and their mistakes and sins were forgiven them by those that lived after them, because they had done their best, through good report and evil, through dark days and dangers, for their fellow-men.

And it is well for every Englishman to bear in mind that it is as true now as it was when our greatest poet wrote the words, nearly three hundred years ago, that—

> 'Nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true.'

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A. = Archbishop | C. = Count | Emp. = Emperor | P. = Priest
Ald. = Alderman | D. = Duke | Eth. = Etheling | Q. = Queen
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